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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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K'taka releases ₹244 cr as truckers go on strike

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

The State government has said that it has approved the release of Rs 244.10 crore to cover additional expenses such as wholesale and retail margins and transportation charges under the Annabhagya scheme for the months of February to May, 2025. GR Shanmukhappa, President of the State Lorry Own-ers' Association, had on Tuesday announced an indef-inite strike by the truckers in view of non-payment of dues worth Rs 250 crore. "We will release the amount in the next two days," said a senior govern-ment official. Rs 21.79 crore from the earlier alloca-tion remains unutilised with the Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation Limited, Bengaluru. *—PTI*

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BMRCL starts QR ticketing on Rapido & 8 other apps

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) announced the launch of QR ticketing through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) on Tuesday, expanding its digital capa-bilities for commuters. Passengers can now pur-chase QR tickets using nine popular consumer-facing apps, including EaseMyTrip, Highway Delite, Miles & Kilometres (via Telegram), Namma Yatri, OneTicket, Rapido, Redbus, Tummoc, and Yatri-City Travel Guide. This initiative complements existing options via the Namma Metro mobile app, a WhatsApp chatbot, and Paytm. *—PTI*

Bibi nominates Trump for Nobel Peace Prize

WASHINGTON, 8 JULY

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nomi-nated US President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize. He personally handed a copy of the nomination letter to Trump during their Monday dinner at the White House. "The President has already realised great opportunities. He forged the Abraham Accords. He's forg-ing peace as we speak in one country, in one region after the other. So, I want to present to you, Mr. President, the letter I sent to the Nobel Prize Committee. It's nominating you for the Peace Prize, which is well deserved, and you should get it," Netanyahu said. After receiving the letter, Trump said, "Wow, thank you. Coming from you is meaningful".*—ANI*

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India abstains on UNGA resolution against Taliban

UNITED NATIONS, 8 JULY

India abstained from a UN General Assembly resolution on Afghanistan, stating that a "business as usual" approach will not achieve the outcomes the global community seeks. The reso-lution, introduced by Germany, passed with 116 votes in favour, two against, and 12 abstentions, including India. India's UN envoy, Parvathaneni Harish, said punitive measures alone won't bring stability and urged a balanced post-con-flict strategy. He stressed the need to prevent terror groups like Al-Qaeda, ISIL, and Pakistan-backed Lashkar-e-Taiba from exploit-ing Afghan territory. India highlighted its humanitarian aid and educational support-for 2,000 students.*—PTI*

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Copper imports face 50% US tariff; 200% on pharma likely

No extension for 1 Aug deadline, India deal soon

WASHINGTON DC, 8 JULY

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday said his adminis-tration will impose a 50 per cent tariff on copper imports, while also hinting at a steep 200 per cent tariff on pharma-ceuticals.

He launched a fresh offen-sive against the BRICS bloc on, claiming it was "created to hurt America" and to "degen-erate our dollar".

Speaking to reporters after a Cabinet meeting at the White House, Trump warned, "Anybody that's in BRICS is getting a 10 per cent charge," adding, "I can play that game too."

BRICS on Sunday con-demned the increase of tariffs, but refrained from naming Trump. It comprises of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

He confirmed that the 1 August deadline for higher US tariffs would not be extended. Letters are already being sent out to trading partners, for-

Donald Trump ***PHOTO: PTI***

malising the levies.

Among the targeted coun-tries are Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand, which received notices on Monday.

India was notably absent from this initial list, as it remains in negotiations with the US over a major trade deal.

Trump said the US is "close to finalising" a deal with India, with CNBC reporting that New Delhi has submitted a final offer covering goods trade worth between $150 bil-lion and $200 billion. India has made it clear no further con-cessions will be offered. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal reiterated that any agreement would only be signed if it serves India's national interest.

The US had previously delayed imposing reciprocal tariffs on India, originally set for 9 July, now postponed until 1 August to allow time for talks. Trump noted that, while progress has been made with countries like the UK and China, others will simply receive tariff notices. "We just send them a letter," he remarked.

Trump also said he may soon issue a similar trade letter to the European Union, while acknowledging improved rela-tions with EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Trump said he is likely to sanction Russian President Vladimir Putin. "I'm not happy with Putin," he said. "He's killing a lot of people. He is thrown a lot of b******t at us. He is very nice all the time, but it turns out to be meaning-less." *—Agencies*

Bharat Bandh: 25 crore workers to strike today

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Over 25 crore workers across different formal and infor-mal sec-t o r s including banking, i n s u r - ance, post-al ser-vices, coal mining, construction, and state transport will join a Bharat Bandh on 9 July, disrupting vari-ous services across the coun-try.

A joint platform of 10 central trade unions has called the bandh in pro-test against the govern-ment's anti-worker, anti-farmer and pro-cor-porate policies. Farmers' groups and rural work-ers' association have also landed their support to the bandh. The services that will be affected during the Bharat Bandh are public sector and cooperative banks, in-surance services, post-al deliveries, power sup-ply in select states, public transport, especially in states with a strong union presence and coal mining and industrial produc-tion in unionised sectors.

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'ASKED TO BLOCK 2,355 A/CS'

X accuses India of press censorship

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Elon Musk's X has voiced serious concern over what it calls "ongoing press cen-sorship" in India, following the temporary blocking of Reuters' official account in the country.

In a statement released Tuesday via its Global Affairs account, X said the Indian government issued a blocking order on 3 July directing the platform to restrict access to 2,355 accounts, including those of international news outlets such as @Reuters and @ReutersWorld, within an hour and without any explanation. It added that non-compliance could have resulted in criminal liability.

However, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) denied X's claims, asserting that no fresh blocking order was issued on 3 July. An official spokesperson said the gov-ernment had proactively acted to get Reuters' account unblocked and had no intention of censoring major international news platforms.

"When Reuters and ReutersWorld became inac-cessible on X, the govern-ment immediately wrote to X to unblock them," the spokesperson said. "X unnecessarily exploited procedural technicalities and delayed unblocking by over 21 hours, finally restoring access at 9pm on 6 July after sustained fol-low-up." The Reuters account had gone dark in India on Saturday night, with a notice citing a "legal demand." Sources suggest the block may have stemmed from earlier gov-ernment requests linked to Operation Sindoor in May.

Other media outlets affected included China's Global Times and Turkey's TRT World, both briefly blocked on the same day.*—PTI*

Reports suggest India is seeking a dual-seat, twin-engine stealth fighter to meet the Indian Air Force's specific requirements ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

India likely to reject US' F-35A and Russia's Su-57E jet deals

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

India is expected to reject offers of the American F-35A and Russian Su-57E stealth fighters, with indica-tions pointing towards a renewed interest in a platform based on the earlier Indo-Russian Fifth Genera-tion Fighter Aircraft (FGFA) programme.

Though unconfirmed, reports suggest India is seeking a dual-seat, twin-engine stealth fight-er to meet the Indian Air Force's (IAF) specific require-ments—something the Su-57E does not currently offer. The original FGFA, a proposed two-seat variant of the Su-57, was shelved by India over concerns about the aircraft's lack of key fifth-generation capabilities, including supercruise.

However, Russia has since addressed many of these issues. The Su-57 has been deployed in combat and is receiving the Izdeliye 30 engine, enhancing its super-cruise potential. The aircraft was also showcased at Aero India 2025.

Despite speculation, India is unlikely to lease the F-35A due to political strings, including US pressure to drop the Russian S-400 system for American THAAD, an option India lacks the fiscal capacity to imple-ment nationwide.

Defence decisions have increasingly reflected geopolit-ical balancing acts rather than pure strategic or economic logic.

With Russia upgrading the Su-57 and India's door to FGFA never fully closed, a stealth fighter based on FGFA may ultimately emerge as the pre-ferred choice. *—Agencies*

DASSAULT CEO SAYS PAK DID NOT DOWN INDIA'S RAFALES

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Dassault Aviation CEO Eric Trappier has d i s m i s s e d Pakistan's claim of d o w n i n g three Indian Rafale jets d u r i n g Operation Sindoor, call-ing it "inaccurate and unfounded". He confirmed that India lost one Rafale due to a high-altitude technical failure, not enemy action.

Pakistan had claimed it shot down five IAF jets, including three Rafales, using J-10C air-craft and PL-15E missiles, without providing evidence.

Trappier said the Rafale's Spectra electronic warfare system recorded no hostile engagements, and flight logs showed no combat losses. French intelligence agencies have flagged a China-led disin-formation campaign targeting Rafale's reputation to promote Chinese alternatives.

The French defence ministry said the campaign aims to under-mine France's strategic autonomy and defence indus-try.

Dassault has sold 533 Rafales globally, with 323 delivered to export clients, including India. *—Agencies*

Bihar reserves 35% govt jobs for women

PATNA, 8 JULY

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Tuesday announced 35 per cent reservation for women who are permanent residents of Bihar in all categories of state government jobs. The deci-sion, made during a Cabinet meeting chaired by Kumar, comes in an election year and is seen as a strategic move to strengthen his appeal among women vot-ers. "35% reservation exclu-sively for women candidates who are original residents of

Bihar in direct recruitment to all categories, levels, and types of posts in all state government ser-vices," Kumar stated. Previously, women from out-side Bihar were also eligible for the quota. The revision limits it strictly to state residents. A recent survey in May indicated that women are more inclined to support the NDA, while men favour the opposition Mahagathbandhan. Cabinet also approved the formation of the Bihar Youth Commission to advise on education and employment. It will include one chairperson, two vice-chairper-sons. *—PTI*

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HIGH DRAMA MARATHI MARCH

Hundreds joined an MNS-led protest in Mira Bhayandar near Mumbai on Tuesday over a shopkeeper's assault for not speaking Marathi. Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) members also participated. Several activists were detained, and Minister Pratap Sarnaik was heckled and forced to leave by agitated protesters ***PHOTO: PTI*** *>>>More on Page 3*

FLAG SAFETY ISSUES

DGCA to curb airfare hikes as MPs flag aviation concerns

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Aviation regulator DGCA said on Tuesday it will put in place a mechanism to curb whopping surge in air ticket prices, recently witnessed during the Maha Kumbh and post-Pahal-gam terror attack, as the issue coupled with concerns over air safety after the Ahmedabad plane crash dominated proceed-ings at a parliamentary panel meeting.

Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson told the com-mittee his airline will complete retrofitting of its fleet in two years to address frequent com-plaints about its seats and other facilities, and underscored its commitment to flight safety, sources said.

Some members of the Public Accounts Committee, led by Congress MP KC Venugopal, demanded an audit of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, citing a spate of inci-

PHOTO: FREEPIK

dents concerning operational safety, and asked when the probe report into the crash will be ready.

NCP MP Praful Patel noting that several incidents following the crash were reported and that every passenger wants to feel safe about their journey.

An MP in the meeting recalled his recent visit abroad in the business class of the airline, highlighting his discomfort caused by the condition of the seat. Some members demanded an overall safety audit of all flights in operation, with the DGCA asserting that it has kept passengers' well-being para-mount. *—PTI*

AI CRASH REASON TO BE OUT SOON AS PANEL SUBMITS REPORT

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has submitted its preliminary report on the Air India Flight AI-171 crash in Ahmedabad to the Ministry of Civil Aviation and other concerned authori-ties, sources confirmed on Tuesday.

The report is based on ini-tial findings into the tragic crash, which claimed over 250 lives. According to the Ministry, the Crash Protection Module (CPM) from the front black box was suc-cessfully retrieved, and data from the memory module was downloaded on 25 June at the AAIB Lab in Delhi using a "golden chassis" for accurate recovery.

One black box was found on a rooftop at the crash site on 13 June, and the second was recovered from debris on 16 June. The investiga-tion is being led by the Director General of AAIB, with technical input from the Indian Air Force, HAL, and the US National Transportation Safety Board NTSB. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

DK Suresh questioned by ED for 2nd time

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Former member of parliament DK Suresh has appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning concerning a money laundering investigation linked to a woman accused of defrauding numerous individuals. This marks Suresh's second appearance before ED officials within a fortnight. The case centres around Aishwarya Gowda, 33, who was arrested by the ED in April, following searches that also targeted Congress MLA Vinay Kulkarni and several others. The ED said that Gowda falsely claimed connections to "high-profile" politicians, promising high returns on investments involving gold, cash, and bank deposits. *—PTI*

Dharmasthala scribe booked for fake news

DHARMASTHALA, 8 JULY

A journalist has been charged with disseminating false information related to an ongoing criminal case in Dharmasthala, according to police reports released on Tuesday. Sudarshan Belalu, a reporter for the website 'Hosa Kannada', published an article alleging that district police officials had intentionally avoided meetings with a legal team representing an individual claiming to hold information about past crimes in the area. Local police have asserted that the report was published without proper verification of facts or evidence and was intended to incite fear among the public. Preliminary investigations revealed that the legal team failed to secure prior permission to meet with the police superintendent, debunking the claims. *—PTI*

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Four minors held for snatching gold in KR Puram

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

State Police have apprehended four juveniles for snatching a bag containing 472 grams of gold ornaments and a mobile phone from a woman in KR Puram. The incident occurred on 3 July while the woman was walking alone near Garden City College. The stolen items, as well as the two-wheeler used in the crime, valued at approximately Rs 50 lakh, were recovered. Meanwhile, police arrested a man for defrauding a jewellery shop owner in Jayanagar, resulting in the loss of 3.16kg of gold ornaments, along with Rs 8.53 lakh in cash. The police detained the suspect in Goa on 14 June. Cops recovered 3kg and 166 grams of gold ornaments and Rs 8,53,600. *—ANI*

State appoints IAS officer as Chief Electoral Officer

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

The State government has appointed IAS officer Sri V Anbukkumar as the Chief Electoral Officer of Karnataka and E/O Secretary to the Government, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms (Elections), Bengaluru, according to a government release. Anbukkumar was serving as the Secretary Housing Department when he was transfered. He also worked as the Managing Director at the KSRTC, Central Office. *—Salar News*

State to ask for 2 defence corridors at Rajnath meet

Govt eyeing Kolar–Chikkaballapura & Hubballi–Belagavi

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Karnataka Minister for Large and Medium Industries MB Patil on Tuesday said he, along with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, would meet Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi to request the sanctioning of two defence corridor projects for the State. The Chief Minister is scheduled to meet Singh in the national capital on Wednesday evening.

"As the country's leading contributor to the aerospace and defence sector, Karnataka deserves two defence corridors—one in the Kolar–Chikkaballapura region and the other in the Hubballi–Belagavi belt. We will present this request during our meeting with Rajnath Singh," Patil said.

Speaking to reporters, he said there was a need for one corridor each in South and North Karnataka, pointing out that leading companies such as Aequs already operate in Belagavi.

MB Patil, Rajnath Singh

PHOTO: PTI

Noting that the State should have been granted a defence corridor when Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh were allotted theirs, Patil said even the Central government had realised this oversight, and Rajnath Singh himself had acknowledged it.

"We are not against projects being sanctioned for other states. We are only demanding what Karnataka rightfully deserves," he said.

"The State is home to major players such as HAL, Safran, Boeing, Airbus, Collins, and Lockheed Martin. We already have an aerospace park near the Devanahalli airport. To further strengthen our position, the government now proposes another aerospace and defence park nearby. Farmers who lose their land will be compensated under the Land Acquisition Act, 2013," he said.

This move comes as farmers have been protesting against the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board's (KIADB) notification for acquiring fertile land in Devanahalli for the proposed park.

In response to actor Prakash Raj's opposition to the project, Patil highlighted land acquisition projects in neighbouring state saying, "Does Prakash Raj not see these developments? *—PTI*

State releases ₹244 cr as truckers go on strike

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

The State government has said that it has approved the release of Rs 244.10 crore to cover additional expenses such as wholesale and retail margins and transportation charges under the Annabhagya scheme for the months of February to May, 2025. The order was issued as the lorry owners transporting rice and other food grains to ration shops across State decided to go on an indefinite strike starting from Tuesday.

This fund allocation comes in addition to a previously released grant of Rs 2,082.99 crore, which was meant for the purchase of an extra five kg of rice per beneficiary and other related costs for the four-month period, a government order issued on Monday said.

Rs 21.79 crore from the earlier allocation remains unutilised with the Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation Limited, Bengaluru, resulting in a shortfall for meeting incidental expenses, the order said.

The government, upon consideration, approved the release of Rs 244.10 crore specifically to meet the costs of wholesale and retail margins and transportation charges, excluding rice procurement costs, on Monday.

"We will release the amount in the next two days," a senior government official.

GR Shanmukhappa, President of the State Lorry Owners' Association, on Tuesday announced an indefinite strike by the truckers in view of non-payment of dues worth Rs 250 crore. *—PTI*

Dogs injure 15 in 70 hrs in Uttara Kannada

KARWAR, 8 JULY

Over the past 70 hours, more than 15 people have been injured in stray dog attacks across Bhatkal town in Uttara Kannada district, health officials said on Tuesday.

No fatalities have been reported so far. Most of the victims were children and elderly individuals who were bitten while walking through residential areas or marketplaces, officials added.

The attacks began on 6 July and have steadily increased since. Those injured have been treated at local hospitals, with several receiving anti-rabies vaccinations.

The rising number of incidents has triggered concern among residents, who are demanding immediate action from municipal authorities.

Many allege that earlier complaints about the growing stray dog population were ignored by civic bodies.

Officials from the Bhatkal Municipality said they are monitoring the situation and plan to launch a sterilisation and rescue drive soon.

The Animal Husbandry Department is expected to assist in identifying and removing aggressive dogs. *—PTI*

Lawyer hires killers for ₹11L, murders colleague in Belagavi

BELAGAVI, 8 JULY

A lawyer in Raibag taluk of Belagavi district hired contract killers for Rs 11 lakh and got his colleague in neighbouring Uttara Kannada district murdered a few months ago, police said on Tuesday. After committing the murder in April 2025, the killers burnt the victim's body.

Belagavi superintendent of police Bhimashankar Guled said Raibag police, acting on the complaint of one Rakha Patil of Savasuddi village in Raibag taluk, filed a case of man missing on 29 April, 2025.

Police first arrested a suspect named Udaykumar Mushannavar, which led to eight more arrests, including Shivagouda Patil, Guled said.

Santosh Patil had filed a property dispute case against Shivagouda Patil in the Raibag court regarding a 1.4-acre agricultural land. Shivagouda Patil hired a contract killers' gang for Rs 14 lakh and paid Rs 11 lakh as advance.

The 10-member gang waylaid advocate Santosh Patil at Savasuddi when he was going to court on and took him to Ganeshgudi, Uttara Kannada district. They hacked him to death with a sword and burnt his body by pouring petrol, Guled said. *—Salar News*

ED hands Waqf Board Rs 3.82 crore assets

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday said it has handed over assets worth more than Rs 3.82 crore to the Karnataka State Waqf Board following a money laundering investigation into a case of alleged fraud against the body.

The case stems from a state police FIR filed against two Vijaya Bank officials and a man named Syed Siraj Ahmed, a first division assistant with the Waqf Board.

The Waqf Board issued two cheques for a total amount of Rs 4,00,45,465 to open fixed deposit accounts in the Vijaya Bank.

However, instead of opening the accounts, the money was "siphoned off" by transferring to fictitious entities, the federal agency said in a statement.

It was found that Rs 4 crore was transferred to the account of a company named Verkeys Realities, which spent Rs 1.10 crore for purchasing a Mercedes car while Rs 2,72,74,444 was transferred to another account.

The agency then attached assets worth more than Rs 3.82 crore in 2017 as part of this investigation and in March that year, filed a chargesheet against six individuals and entities including Verkeys Realities. *—PTI*

Siddaramaiah a massive OBC leader: DKS

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah was an influential backward classes leader and hence the Congress party was utilising his leadership to organise backward classes.

"Siddaramaiah is an influential leader of the backward classes and the party is utilising it. The national level OBC Advisory Council meeting to be held on 15 July would be held under the leadership of Siddaramaiah," he said.

Responding to a question on the recent power tussle speculations, he said, "The CM's post is not vacant right now."

'LEADERSHIP CHANGE A NON-ISSUE'

AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala declined to comment on the leadership change, suggesting that it is no longer pertinent and said that such decisions rest with the party High Command.

"Somebody can have a desire, like a journalist can have a desire to become the editor, but it is ultimately the owner of the television channel who will pick an editor," he said.

YETTINAHOLE PROJECT

Shivakumar met Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on Tuesday to seek early in-principle clearance for the revised forest land diversion proposal under the Yettinahole Project, which aims to supply drinking water to drought-prone areas. *—Salar News with Agencies*

Govt can't file final report in stampede case without HC nod

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday restrained the State government from filing the final report in the Chinnaswamy stampede case against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and DNA Entertainment Networks Ltd, without prior permission.

While hearing multiple petitions related to the incident, Justice SR Krishna Kumar said: "Relist on 5 August. Meanwhile, the respondent is directed not to file the final report without leave of the court. The interim order passed earlier in all the petitions will continue until the next date of hearing."

The counsel appearing for Royal Challengers Sports Private Limited (RCSPL), which owns and manages the RCB franchise, told the court that the company has been fully cooperating with the investigation.

However, he raised concerns that filing a chargesheet at this stage could cause serious and irreversible reputational damage to the company.

Following this, the court orally instructed the government not to proceed with the final report without explicit permission.

"Otherwise, if you file, then they will say permit us to amend [petition] or file a fresh one. So, you complete everything," the judge said. *—PTI*

Accused held in Puttur student pregnancy case

MANGALURU, 8 JULY

A 21-year-old man has been arrested in connection with the alleged sexual assault of a college student in Puttur Dakshina Kannada resulting in her pregnancy. Krishna J Rao, the principal suspect, was apprehended on 4 July in T Narasipura, Mysuru district, and has since been brought to Mangaluru for further investigation. The distressing case emerged when the victim, who is studying in Mangaluru, unexpectedly gave birth at a private hospital, igniting outrage among local residents, civil society groups, and political figures in the Puttur region. The student has formally accused Rao, a resident of Bappalige, of rape. Police reported that Rao had been evading arrest since a case was filed on 24 June, leading to charges under Sections 64(1) (rape) and 69 (sexual intercourse obtained through deceitful means) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. Further legal proceedings are ongoing. *—PTI*

WORKERS STRIKE

11 municipal corporations, including the BBMP, went on a strike under the Confederation of Karnataka State Municipal Corporation Employees' Associations banner over various demands, including staff shortages, at Freedom Park. While the BBMP employees concluded their protest, the indefinite strike of the remaining 10 corporations is set to continue; BBMP offices were left empty during the protests **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Two held in Puttur for harassing minors

PUTTUR, 8 JULY

Two men have been arrested for allegedly harassing two minors and for circulating a video with communal overtones on social media, Dakshina Kannada police said on Tuesday.

The case stems from a complaint lodged by the father of one of the minors, they added.

On 5 July afternoon, the complainant's son, along with a girl known to him, was sitting near Beermale Hill in Puttur Kasaba village when two unidentified men confronted them. The duo allegedly abused the minors using foul language, threatened to record and post their video on social media, and accused the boy of belonging to a different religion, Puttur Town Police said in a statement.

The accused are said to have gathered onlookers and insulted the boy publicly, filmed the incident, and later circulated the video via WhatsApp and Instagram, police said.

Following an investigation, the two accused — Purushottam, 43, of Kudmaru, Kadaba, and Ramachandra, 38, of Aryapu, Puttur — were arrested and are currently being questioned. *—PTI*

Ch'ballapura: Man rapes, impregnates student

CHIKKABALLAPURA, 8 JULY

Chikkaballapura rural police arrested Bheema Raj, a Second Division Assistant at the Government First Grade College, Chikkaballapura for raping a second-year degree student and impregnating her.

Sources said that Raj approached the girl on the pretext of helping her prepare for competitive exams. He said both he had his wife had previously cleared the KPSC exams.

He then allegedly took her to his house multiple times, where along with his wife, helped her study. On one such visit, he raped her when his wife was not home. She then became pregnant and is now six months of pregnant.

The girl, who belonged to the Lambani community (SC), lodged a complaint with the women police station in Chikkaballapur. The police have arrested Raj.

He is also booked under the Prevention of the Atrocities Act. Raj and his wife previously worked as police constables in the City. *—Salar News*

URGES TULU FORUM

'Rename Dakshina Kannada as Mangaluru'

MANGALURU, 8 JULY

The Tulupara Horata Samiti, a regional organisation based in coastal Karnataka, on Tuesday urged the State government to rename Dakshina Kannada district as Mangaluru district, arguing that the new name would better reflect the identity and administrative significance of the region's central city.

Addressing reporters here, Samiti leader Dayananda Kathalsar said the name "Dakshina Kannada" was a colonial legacy and does not represent the linguistic and cultural aspirations of the local population. He claimed the change would promote regional pride and administrative clarity.

Kathalsar also highlighted that several districts in the State, such as Bengaluru Urban and Mysuru, bear the names of their principal cities and said Mangaluru deserves similar recognition.

They plan to submit a memorandum to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah soon. *—PTI*

Tulupara Horata Samiti leader Dayananda Kathalsar said the organisation plans to submit a memorandum to the CM **PHOTO: FB**

Khandre wants to declare MM Hills a tiger reserve

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

State Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre on Tuesday directed officials to take necessary steps to declare MM Hills as a tiger reserve and submit a proposal after consulting residents.

The directive followed a meeting chaired by the minister with senior forest department officials. Khandre instructed them to convene a meeting with all stakeholders.

He also ordered that strict measures be implemented to prevent unnatural wildlife deaths and human casualties due to wild animal attacks.

Officers and staff must be held accountable for incidents within their respective jurisdictions, he said. The directive comes in the wake of the deaths of a tigress and her four cubs in the MM Hills on 26 June, which were allegedly poisoned. *—PTI*

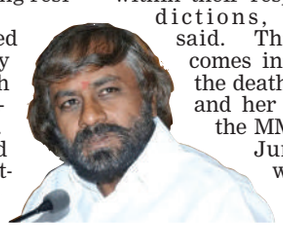


PHOTO: PTI

Kanwariyas vandalise dhaba over onion in food

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 8 JULY

A group of kanwariyas vandalised a dhaba on the Delhi-Haridwar national highway after they were allegedly served onion in their food, police said on Tuesday. Superintendent of Police Satyanarayan Prajapat said police rushed to the spot to pacify the kanwariyas, and no case has been registered in the matter. The incident occurred on Monday night on the Delhi-Haridwar national highway near Falauda bypass under the Purkazi police station. Furious over being served onion in their dinner, around 20 kanwariyas broke some furniture at the dhaba, police said. *—PTI*

Man applies fo Baba Siddique's phone number, arrested

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

A former bank employee has been arrested from Delhi for allegedly trying to take over the mobile number of late NCP leader Baba Siddique in order to siphon off funds from his bank account. Vivek Sabhrewal, 48, was arrested on 7 July. The former Maharashtra minister was shot dead by two assailants in 2024. Siddique's wife, Shahzeen became the `authorised signatory' of the said number. However, she received an email from Vodafone Idea regarding an application for `updating' the authorised signatory from an email id which resembling her email id, but for the difference of one letter. She lodged a police complaint, following which Sabhrewal was arrested. *—PTI*

Union Minister Vaishnaw's father no more

JAIPUR, 8 JULY

Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's father Daulal Vaishnaw passed away at AIIMS Jodhpur on Tuesday. He had been critically ill and was undergoing treatment at the hospital. Various people, including Pali MP PP Chaudhary, Rajya Sabha MP Rajendra Gehlot and other BJP leaders paid floral tributes to Daulal, the sarpanch in Pali district, at his residence in Ratanada. The last rites were held in Jodhpur where Ashwini and his brother Anand Vaishnaw lit the funeral pyre. Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagade, Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devnani and other leaders expressed their condolences on his demise. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Didi fumes after WB man tagged illegal immigrant by Assam

KOLKATA, 7 JULY

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has denounced the BJP following a Foreigners' Tribunal in Assam serving a notice to a farmer from Coochbehar, branding him an illegal migrant. In a post on X, Banerjee described the notice issued to Uttam Kumar Brajabasi, who has lived in the area for over 50 years, as a "systematic assault on democracy." She accused the BJP of efforts to impose the National Register of Citizens in West Bengal, where it lacks jurisdiction, thus targeting vulnerable communities. Banerjee urged opposition unity to oppose the BJP's alleged oppressive agenda, emphasising the need to protect citizens' identities and constitutional rights amidst rising tension. *—PTI*

Bihar restricts women's quota in jobs to permanent residents

PATNA, 8 JULY

The Bihar cabinet on Tuesday decided that the 35 per cent quota for women in government jobs will now be restricted to only permanent residents of the state.

The decision was taken with barely a few months left before the state goes to the polls, amid growing demands for the implementation of a domicile policy in government jobs.

"The cabinet approved .....allowing the 35 per cent quota for women in government jobs to be restricted only for permanent residents of Bihar..," additional chief secretary (cabinet secretariat) S Siddhartha said.

The government had introduced 35 per cent reservation for women in government jobs at all levels in 2016. Earlier, women from other states could apply for jobs.

Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav promised '100 per cent domicile' if his RJD comes to power in the state.

Union minister Chirag Paswan, a BJP ally, also raised his voice for a domicile policy.

Last week, a large number of job aspirants demonstrated in Patna, demanding the implementation of the domicile policy in government jobs.

Dilip Kumar, one of the leaders of the demonstration, welcomed the government's decision.

"Now, the government must introduce a domicile policy to ensure 90 per cent representation of the state's youth in government jobs," he said. *—PTI*

Protest over Marathi pride witnesses high drama

Several activists & leaders who joined the protest were held

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

As hundreds of people marched to defend "Marathi pride" in a protest organised by MNS in Mira Bhayandar area near Mumbai on Tuesday amid high security, they were joined by several political leaders from across parties.

High drama unfolded on the streets, as several activists and leaders of Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) who joined the protest were arrested.

On 1 July, in a video circulated widely on social media platforms, a shopkeeper could be seen being assaulted for not speaking Marathi, and that is what fuelled the protest.

Members of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena demonstrate to counter a protest staged earlier by traders against the slapping of a food stall owner for not speaking in Marathi, at Mira road in Mumbai, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Leaders detained

State Minister Pratap Sarnaik joined the march in the afternoon to express solidarity, but was heckled by some protesters who accused him of speaking against the interests of Marathi manoos earlier.

MNS leader Avinash Jadhav was detained in his house much before the march started, following a prohibitory order issued against him to not enter the area of the protest, Mira Bhayandar.

High drama on streets

While cops initially tried to block the protest citing lack of permission, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis stepped. He said that permission was granted but that specific route MNS chose posed law and order challenges.

This was criticised by protesters as a way to suppress their voice, even as they were able to proceed through the original route.

As the protest proceeded, television channels flashed images of women being bundled into police vans while they were shouting slogans against the "high-handedness" of the police. *—PTI*

> **Whatever Nishikant Dubey has said, he has not said it for the common Marathi people, but for those organisations which have fuelled this controversy. I believe that Nishikant Dubey's statement was not completely correct."**
>
> -Devendra Fadnavis, Maharashtra Chief Minister on Dubey's 'Patak patak ke marenge' remark

DOMICILE MUST NOW

Bihar electoral poll revision 'inclusive': EC officials

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

As opposition parties join hands to hit out at the Election Commission over intensive revision of Bihar's voters' list, poll authority officials said on Tuesday that the exercise is "inclusive".

The opposition has increased its intensity of attack on the EC for the electoral roll revision, saying it will deprive crores of voters their right to exercise franchise.

Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear on 10 July a batch of petitions challenging the ongoing special intensive revision of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar.

Several fresh pleas including a joint petition by opposition parties leaders of Congress, NCP, Shiv Sena (UBT), Samajwadi Party, JMM, CPI and CPI (ML) were filed in the apex court against poll panel's decision to conduct the special intensive revision before Bihar go to polls later this year.

The pre-filled enumeration forms have been distributed to 7.69 crore or 97.42 per cent electors. Booth-level officers are visiting each household at least three times to collect the filled-up

enumeration forms, to ensure that no one is left out.

First visit has been completed, second visit is underway, they said. Many electors were found to have died or have shifted or migrated.

All those who submit enumeration forms will be included in the draft electoral roll to be published on 1 August.

The Election Commission recently made it mandatory for people in Bihar, who aren't recorded in the 2003 Electoral Rolls, to produce at least one of the 11 documents to be eligible to vote. This move has been strongly criticised by the Opposition parties for its potential to be biased and misused with political leaders saying it will deprive crores of voters of their right to exercise franchise.

–Agencies

SFI protests 'saffronisation' of Kerala universities

T'PURAM, 8 JULY

Scores of Students' Federation of India (SFI) activists marched towards major universities in Kerala on Tuesday, protesting what they alleged were attempts to "saffronise" higher education under the influence of the Sangh Parivar.

Raising slogans against Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, who also serves as Chancellor of the universities, protestors broke through police barricades outside Kannur University. Police deployed water cannons, but SFI members managed to reach the Vice-Chancellor's office and staged a sit-in protest.

Tensions flared at Calicut University in Malappuram district, where a brief scuffle broke out between police and students. A similar protest erupted at Kerala University, where demonstrators forced open the gates and entered the headquarters building in Thiruvananthapuram, shouting slogans against the Governor and Vice-Chancellor Mohanan Kunnummal.

The SFI is demanding the resignation of the Vice-Chancellors of both Kerala and Calicut universities, accusing them of aligning too closely with the ideological stance of the Sangh Parivar.

Police forces remained on high alert across campuses to prevent any escalation.

These protests come amid an ongoing power struggle between the Raj Bhavan and the Left-led state government, intensified after temporary Vice-Chancellor appointments made by the Governor drew criticism.

Controversy also erupted at Kerala University after the suspension of its Registrar, who had objected to a private event featuring a Bharat Mata portrait with a saffron flag. *—PTI*

Police personnel detain a member of Students' Federation of India during a protest against Kerala Governor Rajendra Arlekar, alleging saffronisation of state universities, at Kerala University, in Thiruvananthapuram, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

India to tie up with Australia for rare minerals

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

India is currently in discussions with Australia to secure a supply of rare earth minerals, a move that arises from recent restrictions on exports imposed by China. These restrictions have led to a significant shortage of rare earth magnets, crucial for various sectors, including automotive and white goods.

In addition to rare earths, interest from Indian public and private sectors is also focused on copper blocks in Australia. With companies like Adani making substantial investments, the potential for resource acquisition appears promising.

As India seeks to diversify its supply chains, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during the recent BRICS summit, emphasised the need for member nations to collaboratively secure supply chains for critical minerals and technology, preventing any misuse for national advantage. He urged for the establishment of global standards for transparency in artificial intelligence to ensure responsible use. *—PTI*

TDP supporters ransacked home: Ex-MLA

NELLORE, 8 JULY

YSRCP leader Nallapureddy Prasanna Kumar Reddy has alleged that supporters of the ruling TDP ransacked his home in Nellore, causing extensive damage. The incident reportedly occurred late Monday night, hours after Reddy publicly criticised local TDP MLA Vemireddy Prasanthi Reddy. While Reddy and his son were away, a mob allegedly linked to Nellore MP and Prasanthi Reddy's husband, Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy, stormed the residence.

"They smashed windows, broke furniture, damaged two cars, and stole the CCTV hard disk," Reddy told the press. Only his 80-year-old mother was present at the time. "She was terrified. Had I been inside, they might have killed me," he said, accusing the assailants of being drunk or high.

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Reddy also accused police of political bias, claiming opposition leaders receive no protection under the current TDP-led NDA government. Former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy called the attack a serious breakdown of law and order.

Meanwhile, TDP leaders, including IT Minister Nara Lokesh, hit back, alleging Reddy had made insulting remarks against Prasanthi Reddy. *—PTI*

113 BOOKED FOR ATTACKING UP MUTT SEER; 5 INCLUDING SCRIBE ARRESTED

BALLIA, 8 JULY

A case has been registered against 113 people, including BSP's Rasra Municipal Council Chairman Vinay Shankar Jaiswal, for allegedly attacking Mahamandaleshwar Kaushlendra Giri, head of the Shri Nath Baba Mutt in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia.

Five accused, including a local journalist, have been arrested in the matter. A viral video showed a scuffle between Giri and his supporters and Jaiswal along with his associates. the police registered an FIR against 13 named individuals. Giri said that while he had been preparing for upcoming Shravan month rituals, a group of people entered premises raising slogans. When he objected, Jaiswal allegedly incited the crowd to kill him, following which he was attacked. *—PTI*

UP cracks down on 'anti-national' conversion racket

LUCKNOW, 8 JULY

Following the arrest of Jalaluddin, alleged mastermind of a religious conversion racket, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday labelled his activities "anti-social" & "anti-national".

"Initial investigations reveal Jalaluddin's actions are not only harmful to society but also against the nation," Yogi said. Vowing zero tolerance on law and order, he added that properties linked to Jalaluddin's gang would be seized and strict legal action pursued.

Chhangur Baba and his associate, Nasreen—both from Madhpur in Balrampur—were arrested by the state Anti-Terrorism Squad on Saturday. A non-bailable warrant had been issued against him, along with a Rs 50,000 reward for his capture. The duo was remanded in custody and sent to Lucknow District Jail.

They are accused of running an organised operation to convert Hindus & non-Muslims to Islam through inducements, marriage promises, or intimidation—particularly targeting the poor, widows, & labourers. Case has been registered under sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and UP Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Act, 2021.

On Tuesday, illegal properties linked to Jalaluddin's gang were demolished in Balrampur. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

FATF FLAGS MISUSE

'E-comm platforms, online payments used for terror funding'

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Global terror financing watchdog FATF on Tuesday cited the February 2019 Pulwama terror attack, which killed 40 CRPF personnel, and the 2022 Gorakhnath Temple incident to say that e-commerce platforms and online payment services are being misused for terror financing.

FATF also flagged 'state sponsorship of terrorism' and said a variety of publicly available sources of information and delegations' inputs indicate that "certain terrorist organisations have been and continue to receive financial and other forms of support from several national governments".

In June, the FATF, while condemning the April 2025, Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 people killed, and saying such attacks would not have been possible without financial support, had said it would come out with a "comprehensive analysis of terrorist financing", compiling cases provided by its global network consisting 200 jurisdictions.

Giving the case study of use of e-commerce platform for procurement of materials for terrorist attack in India, the FATF said a key component of the improvised explosive device used to enhance the attack's impact - aluminum powder - was procured through the EPOM Amazon.

After a FATF investigation into the Pulwama attack, 19 individuals were charged under relevant provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, including sections related to TF. Among those charged were seven foreign nationals, including the suicide bomber. Moveable and immovable assets connected to the attack, such as vehicles and terrorist hideouts were also recovered.

India has consistently held that Pakistan has given safe haven to designated terrorists, and according to sources, India views that such action by Pakistan warrants that the country be put in the "grey list" of the FATF.

The FATF report flagged that terrorists have been abusing e-commerce platforms and online marketplaces and said terrorists have used such platforms for their operational procurement (equipment, weapons, chemicals, 3D-printing material). *—PTI*

Drug regulator lists 17 drugs that should be flushed

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

India's top drug regulator, the CDSCO, has listed 17 medicines that should be flushed down the toilet if expired or unused, rather than discarded in bins, to prevent harm to people and pets. These include tramadol, diazepam, oxycodone and fentanyl—drugs that can be fatal if misused. Most are prescribed for pain or anxiety. The CDSCO's new guidance stresses that improper disposal can contaminate water, harm wildlife, and lead to drug misuse. It recommends state regulators and chemist associations launch 'take-back' sites for safe disposal. The document aims to ensure environmental safety, legal compliance, and minimise public health risks, including antimicrobial resistance and diversion of expired drugs into illegal markets. *—PTI*

Two suspects in bizman's murder killed in encounter

ABOHAR, 8 JULY

Two persons allegedly involved in the murder of businessmen Sanjay Verma here were shot dead on Tuesday in Panj Peer Tibba area during an exchange of fire with a police team that had gone to the site to seize weapons and other evidence. The police arrested Ram Ratan and Jaspreet, who allegedly helped the three shooters escape in a car. During the operation, the two accomplices arrived at the scene to retrieve weapons and opened fire at the police team. The accused were killed in the crossfire, while a police official was also injured. Three men had arrived on a motorcycle to commit the crime, while two others were in a car and assisted in their escape. Efforts are underway to apprehend the remaining accused. *—PTI*

Mumbai CA kills self after losing Rs 3 cr, blackmail

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

A 32-year-old chartered accountant from Santacruz, Mumbai, Raj Leela More, died by suicide after allegedly being blackmailed and extorted over a private video. He consumed poison and left behind a three-page note naming Rahul Parwani and Saba Qureshi, accusing them of forcing him to embezzle company funds and drain his personal savings. The pair reportedly extorted over Rs 3 crore across 18 months and seized his luxury car, threatening to leak the video. Raj requested that his insurance be given to his mother. A case was registerd under for extortion and abetment to suicide. His family confirmed he had been under severe mental stress. The case highlights growing concerns over digital blackmail. *—Agencies*

HC grills cops over jailing 2020 riots accused sans trial

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked Delhi Police for how long could the accused persons be kept in jail after highlighting the passage of five years and arguments on charge still not being concluded in the terror case related to the February 2020 riots. The court was hearing the bail application of Tasleem Ahmed, accused in a case related to alleged larger conspiracy in the riots. The petitioner sought relief on the ground of parity in relation to the trial's delay. The petitioner's counsel cited that co-accused, Devanga Kalita, Asif Iqbal Tanha and Natasha Narwal were granted bail on the ground of delay in 2021. Violence in northeast Delhi in 2020 had left 53 people dead and 700 injured. The counsel confined his argument on delay. The hearing will take place on 9 July. *—Agencies*

Bharat Bandh: 25 cr workers to protest

Bandh called against the government's anti-worker, anti-farmer and pro-corporate policies

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

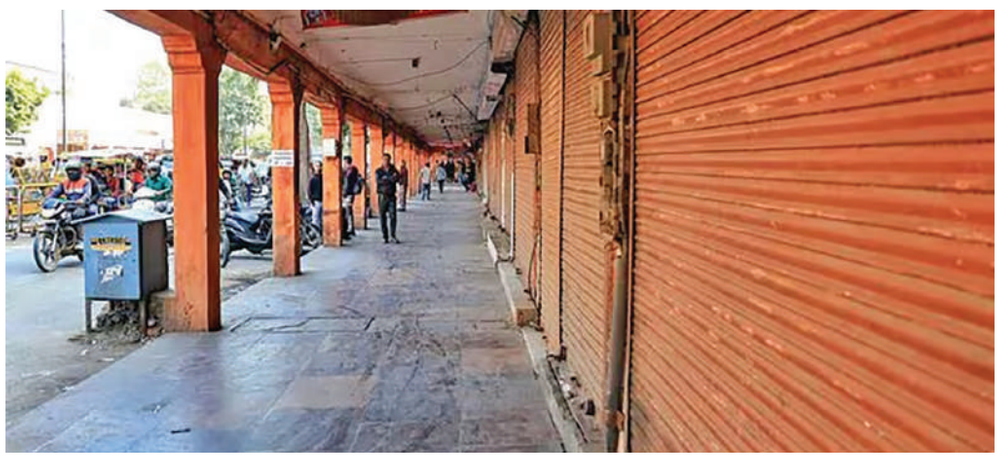
Over 25 crore workers across different formal and informal sectors including banking, insurance, postal services, coal mining, construction, and state transport will join a Bharat Bandh on 9 July, disrupting various services across the country.

A joint platform of 10 central trade unions has called the bandh in protest against the government's anti-worker, anti-farmer and pro-corporate policies. Farmer groups and rural workers association have also landed their support to the bandh.

Leaders from major unions, including All India Trade Union Congress, Indian National Trade Union Congress, Centre of Indian Trade Unions, and Hind Mazdoor Sabha will participate in the protest against key issues like imposition of the four new labour codes, privatisation of public sector units and essential services, outsourcing and contractualisation of permanent jobs, weakening of collective bargaining rights and union activities and organising labour conference. No labour conference has been held in a decade. The unions had earlier submitted a 17-point charter of demands to the Union Labour Ministry. However, they are yet to receive a response from the Centre.

With no official government holiday being declared, key services are expected to be disrupted in across the country.

This Bharat Bandh comes ahead of state assembly elections later this year. It is a reflection of rising discontent among worker and farmer groups over their concerns not being addressed.



A joint platform of 10 trade unions, with support from farmer groups and rural workers associations have called for the nationwide bandh on 9 July *PHOTO: PTI*

List of services that will be open and closed tomorrow

Services to be disrupted nationwide on 9 July	Services which will be available to the public
Banking and financial service	Educational institutions, including all schools and colleges
Postal services	Private offices
Coal and mining factories	Private businesses
State transport services	Hospitals
Public sector units	Emergency services
Companies like NMCD and government-run steel and mineral firms	Police

The services that will be affected during the bandh are public sector and cooperative banks, insurance services, postal deliveries, power supply in select states, public transport and coal mining and industrial production in unionised sectors.

Educational institutions, like schools and colleges,private offices, businesses, hospitals, emergency services and security arrangements and government response will be available. *—Agencies*

Former Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jairam Thakur interacts with residents of a flood-affected area in Mandi district on 7 July *PHOTO: PTI*

Rains lash Himachal, WB; flood alert on

SHIMLA, 8 JULY

With heavy rain pummelling several parts of Himachal Pradesh, weathermen on Tuesday warned of a risk of low to moderate flash floods in Chamba, Kangra, Mandi, Kullu, Shimla, Solan and Sirmaur districts.

A 'yellow' alert was issued in isolated places in the state till 14 July.

Himachal Pradesh received 203.2 mm of rain against the normal of 152.6 mm.

It witnessed 23 flash floods, 19 cloudbursts and 16 landslide this monsoon. 52 people died in rain-related incidents.

Efforts are underway to trace 28 people who went missing last week in Mandi's Thunag, Gohar and Karsog subdivisions.

Meanwhile, the timely bark of a dog in Siyathi village in Mandi's Dharampu saved 67 people before heavy rains reduced the village to a rubble on 30 June.

The dog had been sleeping on the second floor of his owner, Narendra's house when he began howling. When he went near the dog, he saw a big crack on the wall through which water gushed inside the house.

Narendra then alerted other people in the village, who ran for safety. Soon a landslide hit the village, flattening a dozen houses.

The survivors have been living in the Naina Devi temple in Triyambala village for the past seven days.

Meanwhile, heavy rains lashed several southern West Bengal districts, including Kolkata on Tuesday, leading to waterlogging of roads and low-lying areas.

Thunderstorms with gusty wind were forecast across the region.

Purulia and Jhargram districts are likely to receive heavy rain till 9 July. *—PTI*

Assam Muslims lose homes

DHUBRI, 8 JULY

During an eviction drive in Assam's Dhubri district, alleged encroachers clashed with police, damaging excavators and tried to attack officers.

Security forces resorted to a baton charge to disperse the crowd, but no injuries were reported among the police. Approximately 1,069 families were living in three revenue villages slated for the anti-encroachment operation. A district official noted that about 95 per cent of these families had vacated following a recent visit by the Chief Minister.

The eviction will clear encroachments on 3,000 bighas of land for a proposed thermal power project by the Adani group. The affected population, predominantly Bengali-speaking Muslims, expressed strong resistance to the eviction. Raijor Dal president Akhil Gogoi was prevented by police from visiting the site as tensions grew.

The government has committed to providing temporary rehabilitation for the encroachers, including financial compensation. Assam's Chief Minister recently announced plans for a 3,400 MW thermal power facility at the site, indicating the state's priority in addressing encroachments as they aim to clear more than 4,000 bighas of land across Dhubri and Goalpara districts. *—PTI*

Bees stuck to the luggage door *PHOTO: X/@MANOJPEHUL*

Bees disrupt IndiGo flight by an hour

SURAT, 8 JULY

A swarm of bees caused an unusual delay at Surat International Airport on an IndiGo flight bound for Jaipur. Flight 6E-7267 was scheduled to depart at 4.20pm, but took off at 5.26pm after bees clustered around the luggage door, preventing it from closing. Passengers had already boarded, leaving airport staff scrambling to resolve the situation. Initial attempts to disperse the bees using smoke failed. A fire engine sprayed water on the affected area, successfully driving the bees away. The flight departed after receiving the safety clearance. Videos captured by passengers showed dozens of bees stuck to the fuselage and others flying nearby. *—Agencies*

ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL

3 school students killed as van collides with train in Tamil Nadu

CUDDALORE, 8 JULY

A tragic accident in Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, claimed the lives of three schoolchildren when their van collided with a passenger train at a level crossing. The incident occurred around 7.45am when the van attempted to cross Gate No. 170, allegedly under improper circumstances. The gatekeeper has been suspended and arrested for violating protocol by permitting the van's passage despite the gate being closed, according to Southern Railway. Reports indicate conflicting accounts, with some witnesses claiming the gate was open, leading the van driver to proceed without awareness of the approaching train. One of the injured students and the driver corroborated this version of events. In light of this incident, Southern Railway expressed deep regret and extended monetary compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the families of the deceased students. Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister announced an additional Rs 5 lakh for the victims' parents and compensation for the injured. This tragedy has sparked outrage and calls for improved safety measures at railway crossings, with officials on-site to oversee rescue and relief measures. *—PTI*

People gather near the wreckage of a school van after it was hit by a passing train in Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Judicial custody for Kolkata gang rape accused

KOLKATA, 8 JULY

Kolkata court on Tuesday remanded three persons, accused in the gang rape of a student in a law college here to judicial custody till 22 July.

The police prosecutors prayed that prime accused Monojit Mishra, an alumnus and temporary staffer of the college, and two students Zaib Ahmed and Pramit Mukherjee, be remanded to judicial custody.

Pinaki Banerjee, a security guard in the college, was also forwarded to judicial custody till 22 July.

The state's lawyer submitted that the investigators worked on electronic evidence and were awaiting the final forensic report.

The trio was arrested on 26 June and produced before the court, which initially remanded them to four-days in police custody. *—PTI*

Key suspect in Gopal Khemka's murder killed, rival trader held

Police personnel stand guard after a key suspect in the murder of Gopal Khemka was killed in an encounter in Patna on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

PATNA, 8 JULY

While a key suspect in the murder of industrialist Gopal Khemka was killed during a gunfight with police in Patna's Damaria Ghat on Tuesday, a trader was also arrested.

The suspect, identified as Vikas alias Raja, was wanted in multiple criminal cases. Following a tip-off, police located Vikas and engaged in a shootout when he attempted to flee, during which he fired at the officers. The exchange resulted in his death, with police recovering a firearm and ammunition at the scene.

> **What did my son do? He used to work in Chennai. I am not aware of my son committing any crime**
>
> - Mother of Vikas alias Raja killed in encounter

Vikas is believed to have supplied the weapon used in Khemka's murder, which occurred outside his residence. The police have already apprehended the gunman allegedly involved in hiring the assassin.

Ashok Sahu, a rival trader from Nalanda, was arrested for threatening Goenka with a gun during a brawl. He reportedly paid Rs 10 lakhs to the killers to murder Goenka.

Khemka was fatally shot on 4 July,a death that reignited community concern due to his family's prior tragic history, including the killing of his son seven years ago. Investigations continue as officials seek to fully unravel the circumstances surrounding the murder. The government ensured to fight the rising crimes. *—PTI*

PROTECTING TRIBAL RIGHTS

Wildlife clearance not must for public facilities

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has written to the environment ministry clarifying that wildlife clearance is not automatically required for constructing essential public facilities such as schools, anganwadis and roads on forest land under the Forest Rights Act (FRA)- 2006, provided they are recommended by the Gram Sabha.

MoTA offered a detailed clarification on Section 3(2) of the FRA, which allows diversion of forest land for basic facilities for the benefit of forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers.

The environment ministry in a letter, had said that provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, remain unaffected by the particular section.

However, the Tribal Affairs Ministry made it clear that the particular section is rooted in constitutional rights and safeguards, which protect tribal rights.

The letter further said that the right to divert forest land under Section 3(2) must be read along with other sectionsz, which affirm that forest rights are "vested" in tribal and forest-dwelling communities to correct "historical injustices".

The ministry said, "Section 4(2) of the FRA specifies the permissible self limitation. It introduces the self-limiting exception, to the modification or resettlement of forest rights for wildlife conservation, only in Critical Wildlife Habitat."

The stipulated procedure provides a "clear understanding that the wildlife clearance is not automatically mandated".

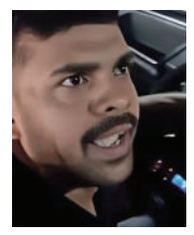
The environment ministry letter was widely used by forest officials to block basic facilities in forest villages despite no formal orders being issued to states. *—PTI*

FRA's Section 3(2) allows diversion of forest land for basic facilities for people living in forest *PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE*

Kerala man blocks toll gate to protest bad roads

PALAKKAD, 8 JULY

In a striking example of non-violent protest, Shento V Anto, a young cinematographer from Kerala, made headlines after refusing to pay the toll at Panniyankara plaza due to the appalling state of the roads.



Instead of engaging in confrontation, Shento parked his vehicle and waited calmly for nearly 9.5 hours until authorities eventually raised the barrier and allowed him through without payment.

His protest was a principled stand against paying for services not rendered. Regularly travelling between Palakkad, Thrissur, and Ernakulam for work, Shento highlighted the poor road conditions and ongoing construction that have turned these routes into hazardous journeys. He recalled, in particular, the stress of transporting his pregnant sister over a deeply damaged stretch.

The Kerala High Court recently observed that tolls should not be collected on unsafe, non-motorable roads—a sentiment that aligns with Shento's stand.

His peaceful resistance has gained public admiration and sparked wider conversations about toll collection, contractor accountability, and road safety.

In contrast to frequent aggressive incidents at toll booths, Shento's calm defiance has emerged as a dignified and symbolic act of civil resistance. *— AGENCIES*

DOME FOR CONSTRUCTION

China has made the world's largest inflatable dome over a major building site to trap dust and dampen noise. The $50 million, 50m tall and 20,000sq m wide dome is China's latest way to promote 'green construction'

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Why Trump is meeting 5 African Presidents

The US President has invited the leaders of Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, and Senegal to Washington this week. Experts suggest that there will be more on the agenda than just commercial opportunities.

"A White House official explained last week that 'President Trump believes African countries offer incredible commercial opportunities that benefit both the American people and our African partners,'" says DW's Washington correspondent, Ines Pohl.

"In a recent update, Trump highlighted the vast commercial potential of African nations, suggesting stronger economic ties could be mutually beneficial. However, his administration hascut back on US foreign aid to Africa, viewing it as wasteful and incompatible with his "America First" agenda. Instead, the focus is shifting toward trade and investment, particularly in West Africa's critical minerals sector and regional security."

- During a White House meeting on 10 January, 2018, he famously referred to Haiti and several African countries as "shithole countries."

Donald Trump's approach to Africa appears to have evolved since his first term *PHOTO: PTI*

Why these five countries?

Trump's approach to Africa appears to have evolved since his first term. During a White House meeting on 10 January, 2018, he famously referred to Haiti and several African countries as "shithole countries."

"We recall those harsh words, but things have changed," says Suleymane Bachir Diagne of Senegal, who teaches and researches at Columbia University in New York City. "Africa is now on the radar of the Trump administration. The continent is recognized as a place to make deals." But if Trump's agenda truly centers on deals and "America First," why invite the presidents of these five relatively small economies? "It's surprising," Diagne says.

What role do natural resources play?

In terms of trade volume with US, the five countries are relatively minor players. However, all possess significant untapped natural resources:

- Gabon is rich in oil, manganese, uranium, iron ore, gold, and rare earth elements.
- Guinea-Bissau holds deposits of phosphates, bauxite, oil, gas, and gold.
- Liberia has notable manganese and gold reserves, and diamonds have been found near its border with Si-erra Leone.
- Mauritania is endowed with iron ore, gold, copper, oil, natural gas, and rare earth elements.
- Senegal boasts gold, phosphates, iron ore, and rare earth minerals, in addition to oil and gas fields.

What about migration and drugs?

"Controlling migration and drug routes — that's what Donald Trump is truly interested in," says Zakaria Ould Amar, an international consultant from Mauritania.

"These five countries lie directly on refugee and migrant paths that have, over the years, sent tens of thousands of people to the US-Mexico border. International drug routes also run through this region."

Amar suggests that these security issues will dominate Trump's talks with the five African leaders.

American affairs expert William Ferreira from Guinea-Bissau is skeptical: "I doubt this meeting will bring tangible benefits to the African countries involved. There's no such thing as a free lunch."

"Our president's trip to Washington to meet Trump is not good news for Guinea-Bissau or its people," he says. Ferreira notes that the Trump administration has halted or drastically cut funding for aid projects in Africa, as well as in Guinea-Bissau, dimming any hopes tied to the meeting in Washington.

Five countries with rule of law challenges

For Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embalo, however, the gathering presents an opportunity to showcase himself as a respected statesman on the international stage, despite significant internal challenges. His term officially expired in February, yet he remains in office amid questions about the legality of his continued presence. The fate of scheduled elections in December remains uncertain.

Gabon's current President, Brice Oligui Nguema, has faced serious corruption allegations and is linked to the recent coup that ousted Ali Bongo Ondimba.

Liberia faces severe social challenges. Joseph Boakai has been president since January 2024. Mauritania's President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, a general and politician, has been in office since August 2019 but the country faces serious social problems.

Senegal, led by President Bassirou Diomaye Faye since 2024, confronts accusations of facilitating illegal international migration. Guinea-Bissau remains embroiled in institutional crises, with civil society groups accusing Umaro Sissoco Embalo of dismantling democratic structures and aiming to establish a dictatorship.

Diplomatic success or political show?

Lesmes Monteiro, Presidential advisor in Guinea-Bissau, offers a contrasting view. "Sissoco Embaló's inclusion among Trump's chosen five is a diplomatic triumph," he told DW.

"He is a determined leader, respected and received by the world's most powerful statesmen: Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, Emmanuel Macron, and now Donald Trump."

Monteiro highlights ideological alignment as a key factor in the selection. *—DW News*

SALAR سالار

MBA graduate exposes online betting ring

PHOTO: PIXABAY

An MBA graduate, who lost over Rs 50 lakh and a friend to online cricket betting, became a whistleblower helping police crackdown on a sophisticated online betting syndicate.

The 27-year-old was defrauded by "guaranteed TOSS FIX" predictions promoted by influencers on social media, losing more than Rs 50 lakh since December 2023. His friend died by suicide in December 2024 after losing around Rs 60 lakh to the same scheme.

Following the devastating losses, the graduate decided to expose the fraudsters. The information provided by him led the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate in June this year to register cases and arrest five online influencers, effectively dismantling a sophisticated online betting syndicate operating through the influencers, unauthorised betting websites, and mule accounts.

This network systematically deceived youth with false promises of match-fixing tips and used aggressive social media campaigns to lure them into illegal gambling platforms.

The whistleblower on Tuesday said the ordeal began in December 2023 when he was pursuing his master's degree.

He clicked on a social media advertisement, which redirected him to an influencer's channel. The admin of the channel gave tips regarding cricket betting, he said. The influencers offered "guaranteed predictions" and directed them to place bets on the betting websites they are promoting.

"I followed the tips and sometimes they were correct. I got into betting and placed bets using the salary of my part-time job and borrowed from friends and family members. But, you start losing money, they will make you lose money. If you don't lose money they will not earn.

The influencers are promoting betting websites and earning fixed payments based on their social media channel followers. They dupe victims by posting false promotional content in the group and with fake followers," he said.

He said he lost over Rs 50 lakh while his friend from Bhopal lost Rs 60 lakh in betting. Unable to handle the financial pressure his friend died by suicide in December 2024.

Subsequently, he decided to take on the fraudsters and posed as a representative of a betting site and contacted the influencers, the MBA graduate told PTI on Tuesday.

"Finally, I got this feeling I have to take on at least now. The influencers who are cheating should be arrested, punished and their channels shut. I did not want others to suffer. As I had my international (mobile) number, I randomly texted them (influencers) stating I own a betting website and asked them to promote the site. I joined their channels and monitored their activities. I gathered personal details about the influencers and approached the police with the details," he said.

According to police, the victim-turned-whistleblower shared the details of the fraudsters. "He was quite proactive in giving us details about the accused and helped the police in apprehending the accused," an official said.

The police has already forwarded a request to take down the four social media channels run by fraudsters and efforts are on to track betting site operators. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AI IMAGE

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Breastfeeding pods: Symbol of changing times for Sikkim's new moms

A large number of women of Sikkim are heaving a sigh of relief as they are now able to breastfeed their babies in the comfort of a clean, secure private space in crowded public places, thanks to an effort of the state government.

The Women, Child, Senior Citizens & Persons with Disabilities Welfare and Development Department has set up six breastfeeding pods at large markets in five of the total six districts in the Himalayan state, and plans to establish similar facilities in the remaining one.

Another pod, operated by the Gangtok district administration, is functional in the state capital.

The latest pod, installed by the department, was inaugurated at Pakyong Bazar (market) in the headquarters town in Pakyong district on 3 July, in the presence of a number of women who came to see the facility.

"Now, such pods are operational in Gangtok, Mangan, Namchi, Soreng, Rangpo and Pakyong towns. We will set up another breastfeeding pod in the headquarters of Gyalshing district," the department's Joint Director Pema Lhamu told PTI.

Breastfeeding pods are innovative, private spaces designed to support nursing mothers in public areas and workplaces. These facilities provide them with a comfortable and secure environment to breastfeed, express milk, or simply take a break.

Mothers with their infants during the inauguration of a breastfeeding pod set up by the Sikkim government, at Pakyong Bazar in Pakyong district of Sikkim, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

This is in sharp contrast with the earlier times when lactating mothers needed to take refuge in places like narrow by-lanes or public toilets to feed their babies.

The administration also has plans to install more pods in all district headquarters and sub-divisional towns in the state in the coming days, Lhamu said.

The department's joint director shared a pivotal moment that sparked the initiative in Sikkim.

- Breastfeeding pods are innovative, private spaces designed to support nursing mothers in public areas and workplaces.

"We had a report from a market in Mangan district where a lady was using bottled milk to feed her child. When asked by a senior department official why she was using bottled milk, she replied that it was awkward and embarrassing to feed babies in public. This interaction led us to start working on addressing this issue in 2024," the official said.

The department has plans to install more breastfeeding pods in all district headquarters and subdivision towns within the state in the coming days, Lhamu said.

She also said that breastfeeding rooms are also operational in all district hospitals, besides a pod at Old STNM Hospital in the state capital Gangtok.

"There are also specialised nurses known as Breast Feeding Angels in all district hospitals and STNM Hospital where these nurses specifically cater to lactating mothers. We plan to take it further with similar initiatives in primary health centres and dispensaries across the state," said the joint director.

Besides the pods run by the Women, Child, Senior Citizens & Persons with Disabilities Welfare and Development Department, one is operated by the district administration in MG Marg, where the famous Gangtok Mall is located and thronged by both locals and tourists.

This breastfeeding pod was funded by the CSR arm of a pharmaceutical company.

Along with this pod, there are two others in the vicinity of MG Marg for locals as well as tourists to use the facilities.

Roshni Tamang, a mother of two children, including a four-month-old baby, said that she is a hawker in Pakyong market and the new pod came as a boon for lactating mothers like her.

Women in Sikkim are actively involved in running shops and businesses.

Kanchen Gurung, an elderly woman of Singtam in Gangtok district, welcomed the initiative.

"In our time, we did not have such places. Babies needed to be fed, and we either used to go between buildings or to public toilets. This is what moving with time means," said Gurung, a grandmother of nine. *—PTI*

US lifts terror tag on new Syrian leader's group

DUBAI, 8 JULY

The Trump administration is revoking the terrorism designation of a group led by Syria's new President as part of a broader US engagement with the transitional government since the ouster of former leader Bashar Assad late last year. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the move, which will take effect Tuesday, "recognises the positive actions taken by the new Syrian government" under President Ahmad al-Sharaa. Al-Nusrah was originally designated a foreign terrorist organisation for its previous affiliation with al-Qaida. In 2017, it split and changed its name to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. President Donald Trump said al-Sharaa"comes from a very tough background." *—PTI*

Germany accuses China of laser attacking its jet

BERLIN, 8 JULY

Tensions escalated between Berlin and Beijing after Germany accused the Chinese military of aiming a laser at a German reconnaissance aircraft during an EU-led mission in the Red Sea. The incident, which took place near Yemen in July, involved a Multi-Sensor Platform participating in the ASPIDES operation, designed to safeguard shipping routes from Houthi attacks. Germany's Foreign Ministry said it as "completely unacceptable" and summoned China's ambassador for an explanation. The Defence Ministry said the laser was fired from a Chinese warship and that the aircraft had aborted its mission as a precaution, landing safely. *—Agencies*

Musk names Taneja treasurer of his American Party

WASHINGTON, 8 JULY

Elon Musk named Tesla's Indian-origin Chief Financial Officer, Vaibhav Taneja, as the Treasurer for his new American Party. Official filings with the US Federal Election Commission list Musk as the political party's sole candidate and Taneja as responsible for managing the party's finances. Known for his USD 139 million pay check and role in Tesla's finances, Taneja will now oversee federal compliance and funds for the party. Taneja, a chartered accountant from Delhi University, joined Tesla in 2016 and became CFO in 2023. The party, headquartered in California, aims to challenge the current political establishment and influence key congressional seats. *—Agencies*

11 killed, over 500 arrested in protests against Kenya govt

NAIROBI, 8 JULY

At least 11 people were killed and over 500 detained during anti-government demonstrations across Kenya, according to the National Police Service. Security forces employed tear gas and water cannons to disperse protesters, primarily young Kenyans voicing their anger over corruption allegations, police brutality, and enforced disappearances of government critics, coinciding with the 35th anniversary of the Saba Saba pro-democracy movement. These protests are part of ongoing unrest stemming from a controversial finance bill that hiked taxes amid a cost-of-living crisis. *—ANI*

Corrigendum

On 8 July, 2025, SALAR NEWS incorrectly used the picture of Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Shariff in the place of President Asif Ali Zardari's picture for the article titled 'Coup fear in Pak as Munir eyes Prez chair'. We apologise for the error.

China warns US against starting a new trade war

Japan hopes for the best; South Africa questions the data

PHOTO: FREEPIK

BEIJING/ TOKYO/ JOHANNESBURG, 8 JULY

China warned the Trump administration on Tuesday against reigniting trade tension by restoring tariffs on its goods next month after Trump dramatically announced reciprocal tariffs on over a dozen countries. Beijing also threatened to retaliate against nations that strike deals with the US to cut China out of supply chains.

"Practice has proven that only by firmly upholding principled positions can one truly safeguard one's legitimate rights and interests," the official People's Daily said in a commentary.

The remarks set the stage for another round of tariff war should Trump stick to what the ruling Communist Party's official daily said was "a so-called 'final deadline.'"

Simultaneously, the article reiterated China's stance that "dialogue and cooperation are the only correct path".

China, which had previously been smacked with tariffs exceeding 100 per cent, has until 12 August to reach an agreement with the US to keep President Donald Trump from imposing additional curbs.

Meanwhile, Japan, which was slapped with a 25 per cent tariff starting 1 August said the move was "regrettable".

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba noted that the Trump administration had proposed a plan to continue talks until the August deadline. "Depending on Japan's response, the content of the letter could be revised," Ishiba said at the meeting Tuesday morning, expressing a forced optimism.

Similarly, South Korean leaders vowed to accelerate tariff negotiations with the Trump administration to "swiftly resolve trade uncertainties," Yonhap News reported, citing a statement from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy. The nation faces a blanket 20 per cent tariffs on imports.

Thai Finance Minister Pichai Chunhavajira said Tuesday that he was "a little shocked" by the latest tariff rate but remained "confident" that it will drop to levels similar to those on other countries, according to Reuters.

Outside Asia, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa disagreed with the 30 per cent tariff rate in a statement posted on X. The levy was "not an accurate representation of available trade data," Ramaphosa said, adding that 77 per cent of U.S. goods entered the country with zero tariff. *—Agencies*

Impostor uses AI to impersonate Rubio & contacts officials

The State Department is warning US diplomats of attempts to impersonate Secretary of State Marco Rubio and possibly other officials using artificial intelligence, according to two senior officials and a cable sent last week to all embassies and consulates.

The recipients of the scam messages, which were sent by text, Signal and voice mail, were not identified in the cable.

"There is no direct cyber threat to the department from this campaign, but information shared with a third party could be exposed if targeted individuals are compromised," the cable said.

Some of those who received calls heard a voice that sounded like President Donald Trump's Chief of Staff, Susie Wiles, which may have been generated by AI.

The scheme, according to the FBI, relied on text messages and AI-generated voice messages that purport to come from a senior US official and that aim to dupe other government officials as well as the victim's associates and contacts. *—PTI*

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hands President Donald Trump a folder during a meeting at the White House on Monday PHOTO: PTI

Bibi nominates Trump for Nobel Peace Prize

WASHINGTON, 8 JULY

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nominated US President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize. He personally handed a copy of the nomination letter to Trump during their Monday dinner at the White House.

Trump hosted Netanyahu for dinner at the White House on Monday (local time).

"The President has already realised great opportunities. He forged the Abraham Accords. He's forging peace as we speak in one country, in one region after the other. So, I want to present to you, Mr. President, the letter I sent to the Nobel Prize Committee. It's nominating you for the Peace Prize, which is well deserved, and you should get it," Netanyahu said.

After receiving the letter, Trump said, "Wow, thank you very much. Coming from you in particular, this is very meaningful".

Earlier, the two leaders sat down with their top aides for a dinner in the White House Blue Room to mark the Iran operation and discuss efforts to push forward with a 60-day ceasefire proposal to pause the 21-month conflict in Gaza.

Trump's Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff will travel later this week to Doha, Qatar, for ceasefire talks. *—ANI/PTI*

1,060 people have been killed in Iran, says Tehran

5 soldiers killed in Gaza, as 51 die in IDF strikes

Five Israeli soldiers were killed overnight in northern Gaza, the Israeli military said Tuesday. Two other soldiers were seriously wounded. Israeli media said the infantry soldiers were on patrol when explosive devices were detonated against them. Meanwhile, health officials in Gaza said Israeli strikes at two locations in the territory killed 51 people.

> **I hope we're not going to have to do that. I can't imagine wanting to do that. I can't imagine them wanting to do that. They (Iran) want to meet ... They want to work something out. They are very different now than they were two weeks ago**
>
> —Donald Trump, US President, on bombing Iran again

China offers visa-free entry to 74 nations

WASHINGTON, 8 JULY

Foreign tourists are trickling back to China after the country loosened its visa policy to unprecedented levels. Citizens from 74 countries can now enter China for up to 30 days without a visa, a big jump from previous regulations.

The government has been steadily expanding visa-free entry in a bid to boost tourism, the economy and its soft power. More than 2 crore foreign visitors entered the country without a visa in 2024.

"This really helps people to travel because it is such a hassle to apply for a visa and go through the process," Georgi Shavadze, a Georgian living in Austria, said on a recent visit to the Temple of Heaven in Beijing.

While most tourist sites are still packed with far more domestic tourists than foreigners, travel companies are now bracing for a bigger influx in anticipation of summer holiday goers coming to China. "I'm overwhelmed with tours and struggling to keep up" says Gao Jun, a veteran English-speaking tour guide. *—PTI*

Trump's U-turn: US to send arms to Ukraine

WASHINGTON, 8 JULY

President Donald Trump said on Monday that the US will have to send more weapons to Ukraine, just days after ordering a pause in critical weapons deliveries to Kyiv.

The comments by Trump appeared to be an abrupt change in posture after the Pentagon announced last week that it would hold back delivering to Ukraine some air defence missiles, precision-guided artillery and other weapons because of what US officials said were concerns that stockpiles have declined too much.

"We have to," Trump said. "They have to be able to defend themselves. They're getting hit very hard now. We're going to send some more weapons – defensive weapons primarily." The pause had come at a difficult moment for Ukraine, which has faced increasing air barrages from Russia during the more than three-year-long war.

The US pause in arms supply had come at a difficult moment for Ukraine, as it is facing increasing air barrages from Russia PHOTO: PTI

RUSSIA FLAGS NATO EXPANSION

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that NATO's efforts to turn Ukraine into a strategic military foothold represents an immediate threat to Russia's national security and left Moscow with no choice but to launch its 2022 military operation, RT reported.

Highlighting NATO's eastward expansion, Lavrov, in an interview with Hungary's Magyar Nemzet, insisted NATO has long abandoned its defensive role, citing interventions in Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Libya: "From whom were NATO countries defending themselves there? Who attacked them?" he asked, RT noted. *—PTI/ANI*

Texan weekend flood toll crosses 100

Firefighters load a body onto a raft during a water recovery along the Guadalupe River on Monday PHOTO: PTI

KERRVILLE, 8 JULY

The death toll from catastrophic flooding in Texas over the weekend surpassed 100 on Monday as search-and-rescue teams continued their operations to find missing people.

Authorities overseeing the search said they will wait to address questions about weather warnings and why some summer camps did not evacuate ahead of the flooding that killed at least 104.

The officials spoke only hours after the operators of Camp Mystic, a century-old all-girls Christian summer camp in the Texas Hill Country, announced that they lost 27 campers and counselors to the floodwaters. *—PTI*

UN adopts resolution on Taliban's women oppression

UNITED NATIONS, 8 JULY

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on Monday over US objections, calling on Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to reverse their worsening oppression of women and girls and eliminate all terrorist organisations.

The 11-page resolution also emphasises "the importance of creating opportunities for economic recovery, development and prosperity in Afghanistan" and urges donors to address the country's dire humanitarian and economic crisis.

The resolution is not legally binding but is seen as a reflection of world opinion. The vote was 116 in favour, with two – the United States and close ally Israel – opposed and 12 abstentions, including Russia, China, India and Iran.

Since returning to power in Afghanistan in 2021, the Taliban have imposed harsh measures, banning women from public places and girls from attending school beyond the sixth grade.

Similarly, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for the Taliban's Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhunzada and the head of Afghanistan's Supreme Court Abdul Hakim Haqqani on charges of persecuting women and girls. *—PTI*

WON'T DECLASSIFY MORE PAPERS

Epstein 'client list' doesn't exist, says Trump administration

WASHINGTON, 8 JULY

Jeffrey Epstein did not maintain a "client list," the Justice Department acknowledged Monday as it said no more files related to the wealthy financier's sex trafficking investigation would be made public despite promises from Attorney General Pam Bondi.

The statement is a public walk-back of a theory that the Trump administration had helped promote, with Bondi suggesting in a Fox News interview earlier this year that such a document was "sitting on my desk" for review.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt and Justice Department spokesperson Chad Gilmartin said Monday that Bondi was referring to the overall Epstein case files.

Even as it released video from inside a New York jail meant to definitively prove that Epstein killed himself, the department also said in a memo that it was refusing to disclose other evidence investigators had collected.

Bondi for weeks had suggested more material was going to be revealed — "It's a new administration and everything is going to come out to the public," she said at one point. Bondi said officials were poring over a "truckload" of previously withheld evidence she said had been handed over by the FBI. In a March TV interview, she claimed the Biden administration "sat on these documents," adding: "Sadly these people don't believe in transparency."

However, the Justice Department determined that no "further disclosure would be appropriate or warranted". The two-page memo bore the logos of the Justice Department and the FBI but was not signed by any individual official.

Conservatives who have sought proof of a government cover-up of Epstein's activities and death expressed outrage. Conspiracy theorist Alex Jones wrote that "next the DOJ will say actually, Jeffrey Epstein never even existed". *—PTI*

Former US president Bill Clinton and alleged rape victim Chauntae Davies at a party; Prince Andrew, late victim Virginia Roberts and Epstein's former girlfriend and co-accused Ghislaine Maxwell PHOTO: X

President Donald Trump and Jeffrey Epstein at a party in 1992 PHOTO: X

PHOTO: X

Gold price climbs by ₹550 to ₹99,120 per 10g

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Gold prices climbed Rs 550 to Rs 99,120 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday due to fresh buying by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 98,570 per 10g on Monday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased by Rs 500 to Rs 98,600 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). Additionally, silver prices remain unchanged for the third straight session at Rs 1,04,800 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Tuesday. Meanwhile, spot gold in the international markets depreciated by USD 11.42 or 0.34 per cent to USD 3,325.09 per ounce.—*PTI*

Rupee rises by 26P, closes at 85.68 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

The rupee rose 26 paise to close at 85.68 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday on the back of a decline in global crude oil prices and a weaker greenback. Foreign fund inflows and firm domestic equity markets further boosted the rupee, according to forex traders. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.75 against the US dollar and traded in a narrow range of 85.64-85.80 before settling at 85.68 (provisional), up 26 paise from the previous close. The local unit logged a steep fall of 54 paise to settle at 85.94 against the US dollar on Monday. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.18 per cent to 97.30.—*PTI*

Delhi airport ranked 9th busiest in the world: ACI

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in Delhi has been announced as the world's 9th busiest airport, processing over 77.82 million passengers in 2024, as reported by Airports Council International (ACI). The report highlighted a significant global increase in passenger traffic, which surpassed 9.4 billion, marking an 8.4 per cent rise from 2023 and 2.7 per cent above pre-pandemic levels. Atlanta's airport topped the list with over 108 million passengers, followed by Dubai and Dallas/Fort Worth airports. Notably, IGIA's ranking improved from 10th to 9th, while Delhi airport observed a rise to 15th in terms of aircraft movements, reaching 477,509 in total. ACI emphasised that these rankings reflect the resilience and growth of the global aviation sector, despite ongoing challenges.—*PTI*

Adani acquires 600 MW unit for ₹4,000 crore

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Adani Power Ltd has successfully finalised the acquisition of the 600 megawatt (MW) Vidarbha Industries Power Ltd for an aggregate sum of Rs 4,000 crore through the insolvency process. The Mumbai Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal approved the resolution plan on 18 June, 2025, and implementation was completed by 7 July. This acquisition raises Adani Power's operational capacity to 18,150 MW and is part of its plans to reach 30,670 MW by 2029-30. The firm is actively expanding its baseload power generation portfolio through both brownfield and greenfield projects, including constructing Ultra Supercritical Power Thermal Plants. Adani Power, India's largest private thermal power producer, reiterated its commitment to the nation's vision of "Electricity for All."—*PTI*

Dorsey's new messaging app works without internet

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Jack Dorsey, who co-founded Twitter, has developed Bitchat, a new privacy-focused messaging app that does not require either a telephone network or an internet connection to communicate. It is now available only on TestFlight for iPhone users.

Dorsey has shared the whitepaper for the app and the beta invitation publicly.

The app, which operates on Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) mesh networks, shares encrypted messages from one smartphone to another by creating localised clusters. This feature makes it a very useful communication tool when the telephone and internet networks are down or when internet access is restricted, Dorsey said.

Common messaging apps, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, use servers and the users need to create an account using either email or phone number.

However, in case of Bitchat, there is no central database. The messages are stored on users' devices and are deleted after a short period – a feature that protects users' privacy, he said.

The app, however, works only within Bluetooth connectivity Mesh range, which is roughly 30 metres.

Jack Dorsey PHOTO: X

- The app, which operates on Bluetooth Low Energy mesh networks, shares encrypted messages from one smartphone to another

However, as users move, their devices can bridge clusters created by other devices, allowing messages to move across distances beyond standard Bluetooth limits.

Even though Bitchat is currently available in beta exclusively through Apple's TestFlight platform, it quickly hit the testing cap of the 10,000 users within a short time after its launch.

While the beta phase of the app focuses on battery optimisation and relay stability, Dorsey said the developers are planning to expand support for more platforms. With the final release, the team is planning to introduce the Wi-Fi protocol to enhance bandwidth and enable sharing of rich content like pictures and videos. —*Agencies*

Jane Street to challenge Sebi's India trade ban

US firm accused of manipulating stock market indices

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

US-based trading firm Jane Street is preparing to challenge the Securities and Exchange Board of India's (Sebi) decision to ban it from Indian markets over alleged manipulation of index levels. The company has described Sebi's charges as "beyond disappointing" and "extremely inflammatory" in an internal email to employees.

Sebi has accused Jane Street of manipulating stock market indices, primarily Bank Nifty and Nifty, and making unlawful profits worth Rs 4,843 crore. In addition to the trading ban, the company's assets have also been seized. Sebi's probe had been ongoing for over two years.

Jane Street strongly denied all allegations, stating its actions were in line with standard market practice known as "basic index arbitrage trading". The company asserted that arbitrage trades are "a core and commonplace mechanism of financial markets" and criticised Sebi for mischaracterising this practice as manipulation, thereby disregarding the essential role played by arbitrageurs and liquidity providers.

Jane Street strongly denied Sebi's allegations, saying that all of its actions were in line with standard market practice known as 'basic index arbitrage trading' PHOTO: X

While the firm has not disclosed specific details of its legal or regulatory strategy, sources confirmed it is gearing up to contest the charges.

Former Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch said the probe began during her tenure in April 2024, and said it was "unfortunate" to imply any regulatory failure.

Buch further said that Sebi had been actively disclosing investigation timelines and had made policy interventions in October 2024. A "cease and desist" letter was issued to Jane Street by NSE in February 2025 on Sebi's instruction.

Market observers note that Sebi investigations typically take over a year.

The outcome of this case could set a precedent for how complex trading strategies like index arbitrage are viewed by regulators in India. —*Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

Textiles up, pharma slides on US moves

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Indian markets witnessed contrasting movements on 8 July as the United States intensified its trade offensive, issuing formal tariff notices to 14 countries. While this triggered a rally in domestic textile shares, pharmaceutical stocks declined amid uncertainty over India's pending trade deal with Washington.

Textile exporters surged after the US imposed a 35 per cent tariff on Bangladeshi garments, sharply raising India's competitiveness in global apparel markets. Shares of Gokaldas Exports rose 7.8 per cent, Vardhman Textiles 7.4 per cent, while KPR Mill and Welspun Living gained around 2 per cent. The new tariffs, effective from 1 August, come as Vietnam holds 19 per cent of the US market, Bangladesh 9 per cent, and India 6 per cent.

In contrast, Indian pharma shares slipped over fears that India may face tariffs if it fails to conclude its long-anticipated trade agreement. Aurobindo Pharma and Lupin fell nearly 3 per cent, with declines across Dr Reddy's, Sun Pharma, and others. Despite the dip, analysts noted India's strong position in Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) and contract manufacturing could attract US buyers seeking to reduce reliance on China.

Trade experts, however, have urged caution. Think tank GTRI warned that President Trump's approach resembles a "Yielding to American Tariff Retaliation Agreement", pressuring countries to sign on US terms.

—*PTI with Agencies*

Banking, IT boost Sensex by 270pts

Nifty climbed by 61.20 points on Tuesday to settle at 25,522.50 PHOTO: X

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

Benchmark BSE Sensex closed higher by 270 points on Tuesday, helped by late-day buying in banking and select IT shares as well as positive trends in the Asian markets.

After moving in a narrow range for most of the session, the 30-share barometer rose by 270.01 points or 0.32 per cent to close at 83,712.51. As many as 18 of its constituents ended higher and 12 lower.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 61.20 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at 25,522.50, after a muted trading session.

Stock markets moved in a range for most of the session before the emergence of value buying in the pre-close session. Investors are awaiting definitive progress on the proposed India-US trade even as the US extended the suspension of reciprocal tariffs until August 1, experts said.

From the Sensex firms, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Eternal, Asian Paints, NTPC, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Adani Ports, Infosys and State Bank of India were among the major gainers.

However, Titan tumbled over 6 per cent. Trent, Axis Bank, Maruti and Hindustan Unilever were also among the laggards.

The US is close to making a trade deal with India, President Donald Trump has said.

The remarks came as the Trump administration sent out the first tranche of "letters" to various countries on Monday detailing the tariffs that the US will impose on products from those countries entering America.

The countries that got these letters, signed by Trump, were Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Thailand, and Tunisia. —*PTI*

Titan shares tumble over 6%

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Shares of Tata group firm Titan Company on Tuesday tumbled over 6 per cent as the company's first quarter business update failed to cheer investors.

The stock dropped 6.17 per cent to Rs 3,440.60 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it lost 6.32 per cent to Rs 3,435.

On the NSE, it tanked 6.16 per cent to Rs 3,440.

The stock emerged as the biggest laggard among the Sensex and Nifty firms.

The company's market valuation eroded by Rs 20,086.15 crore to Rs 3,05,451.71 crore.

Tata group firm Titan Company saw its consumer businesses grow by 20 per cent year-on-year in the first quarter of this fiscal, according to a regulatory filing by the company. —*PTI*

Auto sect seeks strategy on critical materials

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Facing potential production losses due to a shortage of rare earth magnets, the auto component industry body ACMA on Tuesday sought a national strategy on critical materials to secure electric vehicle production in the country.

Terming the rare earth shortages as a major concern, Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) President Shradha Suri Marwah said that the industry is agile and has started to work on alternative solutions.

"The limited availability of rare earth magnets remains a concern, underscoring the need for a national strategy on critical materials to secure the future of EV and mobility manufacturing in India," she stated.

The auto components industry reported a turnover of USD 80.2 billion for FY2025, a growth of around 10 per cent. —*PTI*

SMARTWORKS EYES ₹583CR FROM IPO

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Smartworks Coworking Spaces, based in Gurugram, will launch its Initial Public Offering (IPO) on 10 July, aiming to raise Rs 583 crore. The issue will close on 14 July, with a price band set at Rs 387–Rs 407 per share. At the upper end, the company's valuation is estimated at around Rs 4,645 crore.

As of 30 April, 2025, Smartworks had a total consolidated debt of Rs 382 crore. It plans to utilise Rs 114 crore from the IPO proceeds to repay loans. Additionally, Rs 226 crore will be allocated towards capital expenditure for fit-outs and security deposits in new centres, with the remaining funds reserved for general corporate purposes.

The company operates 48 centres with over 1.9 lakh seating capacity, covering 8.31 million sq ft. Another 0.7 million sq ft is under fit-out, while 1.7 million sq ft has been leased. —*PTI*

Techies' return not to hit iPhone

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The return of Chinese technology professionals from an Apple vendor's facility will have no impact on the production of the upcoming iPhone 17, sources said on Tuesday. iPhone maker Apple continues to be on track to scale up production in India, they said.

According to the sources, Apple vendors in India, Foxconn and Tata Electronics, have also seen easing of capital goods sourcing from China. These capital goods are critical for the production of iPhones.

"The return of Chinese professionals from Foxconn has had no impact on iPhone production. The production of iPhone 17 in India will be as per schedule," a source aware of the development on iPhone production told PTI.

A query sent to Apple, Foxconn and Tata Electronics did not elicit any response on the matter.

Multiple sources have shared that hundreds of Chinese professionals working at Foxconn India units have returned to China in the last two months.

According to sources, these engineers were handling assembly lines, factory design and also involved in training talents to handle tools and machines for iPhone production.

Another source said there has been an easing of the supply of capital goods from China for iPhones. —*PTI*

GOOGLE ROLLS OUT AI MODE FOR INDIAN USERS

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Google has rolled out its Artificial Intelligence (AI) Mode for all users in India, which will make it easier to ask anything to Google, and will help users to get helpful AI-powered responses and explore topics more deeply on the web.

The feature, which Google touts has its most powerful AI search experience yet was introduced last month as an experiment in Labs in English. "The response has been encouraging, with people appreciating its speed and the quality of the responses," Google said in a statement on its blog.

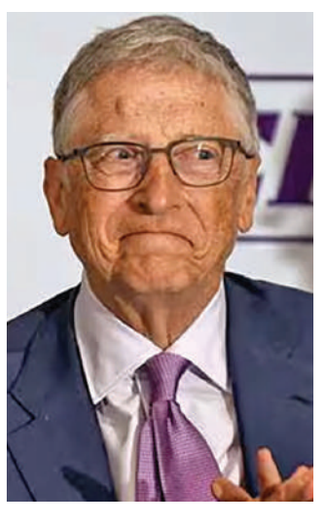
"We've seen users putting it to work in diverse ways – from diving deep into topics for learning to understanding complex how-tos."

This feature, powered by a custom version of Gemini 2.5, will be available in Google Search, and there will be no need to sign up for Labs. This AI mode feature is multimodal, which means that users can by just speaking their question or even snapping a photo to raise a query.

In AI parlance, multimodal refers to the ability of a system to process and integrate information from multiple types of data simultaneously. —*ANI*

$52B LOSS IN A WEEK

Bill Gates no longer in world's top 10 richest people



BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft, is no longer among the world's top 10 wealthiest people in the world.

After he lost over USD 52 billion over the last week, his net worth as of Monday is at least less than that of Gates' former assistant Steve Ballmer.

This is after recalculation, taking into account Gates' charitable offerings, and at present, he is the 12th top billionaire in the world as of Monday, when the markets closed.

According to the Bloomberg Billionaire list, the recalculation of his assets reduced his net worth by 30 per cent.

According to reports, Bill Gates and his ex-wife Melinda Gates gave away $60 billion as of last year, and he intends to donate $200 billion for charity by 2045 via his foundation.

Steve Ballmer, his former employee who also succeeded him as Microsoft, is now the fifth richest person in the world with a $172 billion net worth.

He took over as the CEO of Microsoft in 2000 and exited in 2014.

He is below Elon Musk, Mark Zukerberg, Larry Ellison and Jeff Bezos in the list of top 10 wealthiest people in the world. —*Agencies*

Tesla CEO Elon Musk is all set for a new beginning. Musk on Monday said that he is launching a new political party. The announcement has affected his businesses. Investors are worried that Musk might move away from his businesses with his new found ambition.

Tesla shares 6.8% ↓	Current mcap loss $68B
Expected mcap loss $80B	Musk's net worth $346B

Musk's net worth lost in a day: $15.3B on 7 July

PHOTO: ANI

Shadab, Haris to miss Pak's T20I in Bangladesh

LAHORE, 8 JULY

Pakistan vice-captain Shadab Khan and pacer Haris Rauf have been ruled out of the upcoming three-match T20I series against Bangladesh, set to be played in Dhaka from 20 to 24 July. Haris sustained a hamstring injury in the USA's Major League Cricket, while Shadab is recovering from shoulder surgery in the UK with no confirmed return date. Selectors also omitted senior players Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, and Shaheen Afridi. Uncapped pacers Ahmed Daniyal and Salman Mirza have been included, with Mohammad Nawaz and Hussain Talat recalled. Salman Ali Agha remains captain. Naseem Shah and Mohammad Wasim Jr were ruled out due to fitness issues. Shane McDermott was named fielding coach. *—PTI*

Ranade appointed assistant coach for Mumbai team

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

Dhawal Kulkarni will continue as Mumbai's bowling coach with Atul Ranade and Bravish Shetty appointed as the assistant and bowling coaches respectively for the city's senior men's team, said the Mumbai Cricket Association on Tuesday. After winning the Ranji Trophy for a record-extending 43rd time in the 2023-24 season, Mumbai finished at the semi-final stage last domestic season while they won the Irani Cup and Vijay Hazare Trophy and finished as the runner-up in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. MCA had earlier retained Omkar Salvi as the head coach. Shetty has replaced Vinit Indulkar as the batting coach while Ranade replaced Onkar Gurav as the assistant coach. *—PTI*

Portugal, Italy end Euro 2025 match in a draw

GENEVA, 8 JULY

Portugal desperately pressed Italy to find a goal to stay alive at the Women's European Championship and finally got it in the 89th minute from Diana Gomes to secure a 1-1 draw. The result on Monday sent Spain into the quarterfinals from Group B after its earlier 6-2 rout of Belgium which was eliminated from contention.Italy was minutes from joining Spain in the quarterfinals with a lead taken in the 70th on captain Cristiana Girelli's high-class curling shot from 20 meters."The mood of the team is strong, we're not devastated," said Girelli. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Zimbabwe pacer Matigimu fined for dangerous bowling

BULAWAYO, 8 JULY

Zimbabwe pacer Kundai Matigimu has been fined 15 per cent of his match fee and handed a demerit point for throwing the ball in an "inappropriate and dangerous" manner during the opening day of the ongoing second Test against South Africa. The incident occurred during the 72nd over of South Africa's first innings, when Matigimu fielded a ball in his follow-through and threw it at batter Lhuan-de Pretorius, hitting him on the wrist at close range. Matigimu breached Article 2.9 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel. The pacer admitted to the offence and accepted the sanction, and there was no formal hearing. This was the Zimbabwean's first offence in the last two years. *—PTI*

FIDE Grand Swiss: Indians seeded top 2

The 11-round tournament will feature 172 players with 116 in the Open competition

Arjun Erigaisi PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

- In the Women's Grand Swiss, 44 players have qualified by rating. Former world champion Tan Zhongyi is the top-rated participant, followed by seasoned elite world players Koneru Humpy, Anna Muzychuk and Kateryna Lagno. 2023 winner R Vaishali is also taking part in the contest

Indian stars Arjun Erigaisi and world champion D Gukesh have been seeded as top two for the fourth FIDE Grand Swiss chess to be held at Samarkand, Uzbekistan from September 3 to 16 where an enhanced prize purse and tickets to the prestigious Candidates tournament will be at stake.

As per regulations, the top two in both the Open and the Women's competition will qualify for the 2026 Candidates tournament, where the challenger for the title of world champion will be determined.

The rule requiring players to have competed in 30 plus classical rated games between July 2024 and June 2025 has excluded high-profile names such as former world champions Magnus Carlsen and Viswanathan Anand.

Former world champion Ding Liren will not be participating in the event either. Fabiano Caruana, who played in all three previous Grand Swiss tournaments, will also not be taking part, having already secured a spot in the 2026 Candidates Tournament by winning the 2024 FIDE Circuit.

Erigaisi and Gukesh are number one and two seeds respectively, while R Praggnanandhaa is seeded fourth. World number eight 22-year-old Alireza Firouzja is ranked fifth.

The remainder of the top 10 in the Open section is made up of more seasoned Grandmasters – two-time World Championship challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi, Anish Giri, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Levon Aronian and Vladimir Fedoseev.

In the Women's Grand Swiss, 44 players have qualified by rating.

Four additional players are joining them from continental spots, four via FIDE wildcards, and another four as nominations from the local organiser.

Former world champion Tan Zhongyi is the top-rated participant, followed by seasoned elite world players Koneru Humpy, Anna Muzychuk and Kateryna Lagno. 2023 winner R Vaishali is also taking part.

The Grand Swiss is one of the most significant tournaments in the chess calendar as it is a pathway to the Candidates tournament. The 2023 Grand Swiss was won by India's Vidit Gujrathi (Open) and R Vaishali (Women). *—PTI*

D Gukesh PHOTO: PTI

Deepti Sharma rises to 2nd slot in ICC WT20I rankings

DUBAI, 8 JULY

Indian spinner Deepti Sharma is on the verge of achieving the number one position in the ICC Women's T20I rankings for the first time in her career. Following her impressive performances, she has climbed to second place, now only eight rating points behind Pakistan's Sadia Iqbal, who currently leads the rankings.

Despite being a consistent presence in the top 10 for the majority of the past six years, the 27-year-old has never reached the top position. However, her recent form has put her within striking distance of this milestone. Deepti's rise in the rankings comes after a stellar three-wicket haul in the third match of India's T20I series against England. Should she continue her strong performances in the remaining two matches of the series, she could overtake Iqbal for the top spot.

In addition to Deepti's success, her teammate, pacer Arundhati Reddy, has also made significant progress, jumping 11 places to share 43rd position in the T20I bowling rankings after contributing her own three-wicket haul in the recent match at The Oval. The England bowlers have also seen improvements following their narrow five-run victory at the iconic venue. *—PTI*

India look for runs to seal T20 series against England

MANCHESTER, 8 JULY

India will look to their captain Harmanpreet Kaur and explosive opener Shafali Verma to regain their scoring form as they strive to secure the women's T20I series in the fourth match on Wednesday. India currently leads the five-match series 2-1, but England exposed some vulnerabilities in the Indian side during a close five-run victory in the third game at The Oval last week.

Shafali displayed promising form with a brisk 25-ball 47, while Harmanpreet added a quickfire 17-ball 23, but both batters failed to capitalise on their starts, hindering India's momentum. Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, and Amanjot Kaur have been the mainstays in India's batting lineup thus far, and support from the experienced duo is crucial for the team's success.

India's spinners N Shree Charani, Deepti Sharma, and pacer Arundhati Reddy have excelled, securing regular breakthroughs, but support from Radha Yadav and Amanjot Kaur is needed, as both have conceded runs at an alarming rate. The match is set to begin at 11pm IST. *—PTI*

England women's squad announced for India ODI

LONDON, 8 JULY

England has announced a 15-member squad for the upcoming three-match ODI series against India, set to take place on 16, 19, and 22 July at locations including Southampton, Lord's, and Chester-Le-Street.

Sophie Ecclestone makes her return to the ODI side after missing the series against the West Indies, while Maia Bouchier has been recalled following her inclusion in the T20I series as a replacement for the injured Nat Sciver-Brunt. Sciver-Brunt, who sustained a groin injury that kept her out of the final three T20Is, is expected to be fit for the ODI matches.

In other football news, Spain has advanced to the quarterfinals of Group B after their decisive 6-2 victory over Belgium, which has been eliminated from contention. *—PTI*

Sinner reaches Wimbledon quarters

Sinner said he will have an MRI exam on Tuesday on his elbow 'to see if there's something serious' PHOTO: X/ Jannik Sinner

LONDON, 8 JULY

Jannik Sinner advanced to the Wimbledon quarterfinals despite hurting his right elbow in a fall in the opening game and dropping the first two sets when his opponent, Grigor Dimitrov, wound up quitting in the third because of an injured pectoral muscle.

Sinner said he will have an MRI exam on Tuesday on his elbow "to see if there's something serious" and added in Italian: "There is some concern."

The No. 1-seeded Sinner hadn't dropped a set in the tournament until falling behind No. 19 Dimitrov 6-3, 7-5. But at 2-all in the third set, Dimitrov stopped playing. It's the fifth consecutive Grand Slam tournament where the 34-year-old Dimitrov failed to complete a match. "He's been so unlucky in the past couple of years. An incredible player," Sinner said.

On the last point against Sinner, Dimitrov served and immediately clutched his chest with his left hand. He took a few steps and crouched, before sitting on the grass. Sinner walked over to that side of the court to check on him. "My pec," Dimitrov told Sinner.

Dimitrov then went to the sideline, sat in his chair and was checked by a trainer and doctor. As Dimitrov talked with them, Sinner knelt nearby. After a delay of a few minutes, Dimitrov walked toward the locker room with the medical personnel. Soon, he reemerged and said he couldn't continue. "I don't take this as a win, at all," Sinner said. "This is just a very unfortunate moment to witness for all of us." *—PTI*

Andreeva beat Navarro at Wimbledon

LONDON, 8 JULY

Mirra Andreeva was so focused on not thinking about the score that she didn't grasp it when the fourth-round match was over PHOTO: PTI

Mirra Andreeva was the last person on Centre Court to realize she beat Emma Navarro, a result that made her the youngest woman in 18 years to reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals.

Andreeva was so focused on not thinking about the score that the 18-year-old Russian didn't grasp that the fourth-round match was over when Navarro netted a forehand.

So instead of celebrating a 6-2, 6-3 win, the seventh-seeded Andreeva calmly turned back to her baseline and started fiddling with her racket, seemingly getting ready for the next point.

It wasn't until she noticed the reaction from the crowd – and coach Conchita Martinez celebrating – that it dawned on her she won.

"Honestly, I just kept telling myself that I'm facing break points. I tried to tell myself that I'm not the one who is up on the score, I'm the one who is down," Andreeva said in an on-court interview.

"In the end I completely forgot the score. I'm happy that I did it because I think that (otherwise) I would be three times more nervous on the match point."

Andreeva became the youngest player since Nicole Vaidisova in 2007 to reach the women's quarterfinals at the grass-court Grand Slam. *—PTI*

> **I think the experience (in pressure situations) can be similar. But the intimidation factor and the pressure that would replicate for us in a World Cup game, a World Cup match between India and Pakistan or a semifinal or a final of the World Cup, your legs are shivering because of sheer pressure**
>
> —Virat Kohli, drawing parallels between on-field pressure situations in cricket and tennis

RCB's Yash booked for 'sexual exploitation'

GHAZIABAD, 8 JULY

An FIR has been registered against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) pacer Yash Dayal (27) for alleged sexual exploitation, police confirmed on Tuesday. The complaint was filed at Indirapuram police station on Sunday under BNS Section 69, which pertains to sexual intercourse by deceitful means, including a false promise of marriage.

The action follows a complaint made by a woman to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath via the Integrated Grievance Redressal System (IGRS) on 21 June. The woman, a resident of Indirapuram, alleged she had been in a five-year relationship with Dayal during which he promised marriage and physically exploited her.

She later posted details of her ordeal on X (formerly Twitter), where the story went viral. On 27 June, she submitted a handwritten complaint to police, accusing Dayal of physical and mental harassment. "He introduced the complainant to his family and behaved like a husband, which made her trust him completely," the complaint read. She also alleged financial and emotional exploitation.

The woman provided evidence including mobile call logs, screenshots, and video calls. Deputy Commissioner of Police Trans Hindan confirmed that the FIR was filed after reviewing the evidence. Statements from both parties will be recorded in due course.

Dayal could not be reached for comment. *—PTI*

SEEKS RECONCILIATION

Mbappé drops harassment case against PSG

PARIS, 8 JULY

Kylian Mbappé has dropped the legal proceedings he started this year against Paris Saint-Germain for moral harassment, a person with knowledge of the situation told the Associated Press.

The Paris prosecutor's office last month said Mbappé accused the club in a legal filing, and opened an investigation. A person close to the France captain said on Tuesday that Mbappé's decision to end that legal procedure was linked to a desire for reconciliation with his former club.

The person was not authorized to speak publicly in line with the practice of Mbappé's entourage.

The France captain is at odds with his former club, arguing PSG owes him 55 million euros ($61 million) in unpaid wages. The person said the end of the criminal proceedings does not affect that ongoing procedure before an industrial tribunal.

The Paris prosecutor's office last month said Kylian Mbappé accused the club of moral harassment in a legal filing PHOTO: X/ KYLIAN MBAPPÉ

When he accused Paris Saint-Germain of moral harassment this spring, Mbappé denounced the lofting' he claimed to have been subjected to at the club. The word lofting is used in France to describe a practice that involves isolating a player from the main squad for sporting, administrative, or disciplinary reasons.

Mbappé was unhappy with the way he was treated by the Ligue 1 club when he was sidelined before the 2023-24 season, following his decision not to extend his club contract.

But according to his entourage, relations between Mbappé and PSG president Nasser Nasser Al-Khelaïfi have been improving for several weeks.

Mbappé joined Real Madrid last summer. He will face his former club in Wednesday's Club World Cup semis. *—PTI*

Spain beat Belgium 6–2, enter Euro 2025 quarters

THUN, 8 JULY

World Cup champion Spain booked a spot in the quarterfinals of the Women's European Championship after another statement victory, 6-2 over Belgium.

It was, surprisingly, the first time Spain won back-to-back matches at the Euros, after beating Portugal 5-0.

With 11 goals in two matches, Spain and its star-packed squad is living up to its billing as the tournament favorite and two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas had a stark warning for the other teams.

"The team is having an excellent performance. But almost all of us have room for improvement," Putellas said in translated comments.

She scored two against Belgium and was named player of the match in a second straight game.

"I'm feeling very well mentally and I'm being quick," Putellas said. "I see things in advance and for me that's the trigger that I feel good. And that means I can help others."

The result combined with Italy's 1-1 draw against Portugal in the late match advanced Spain to the last eight.

On Friday, Italy faces Spain in their final group match and Portugal plays the eliminated Belgium. *—PTI*